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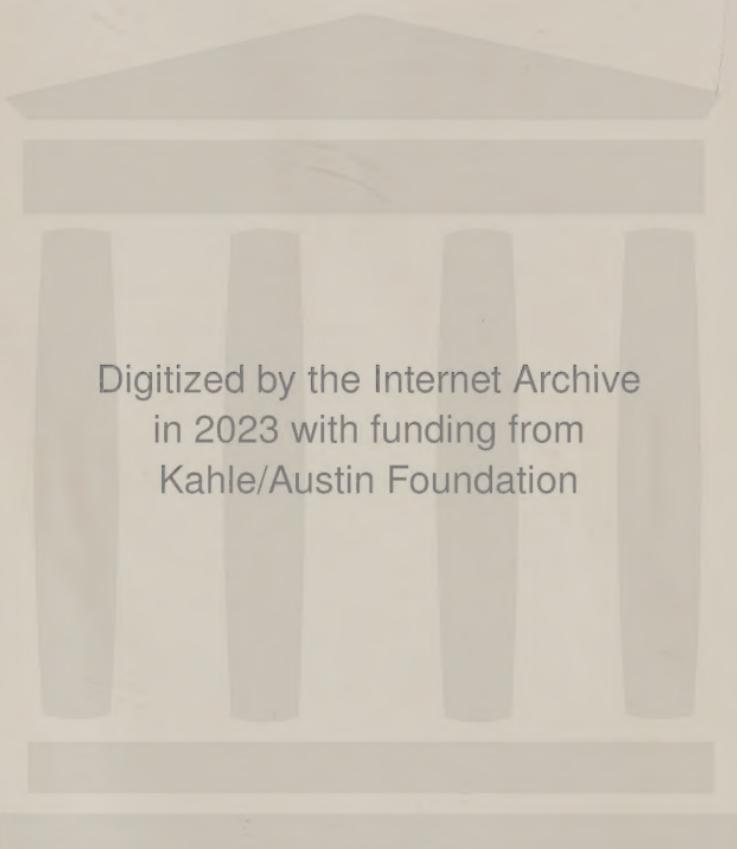
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ROBERT PECKHAM

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE BLACK PRINCE
GASTON DE FOIX
MAHASENA
PROSERPINE
DESIDERIO
COLLECTED POEMS
WITH THE RUSSIANS IN MANCHURIA
A YEAR IN RUSSIA
LANDMARKS IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE
AN OUTLINE OF RUSSIAN LITERATURE
RUSSIAN ESSAYS AND STUDIES
THE GLASS MENDER
FORGET-ME-NOT AND LILY OF THE VALLEY
ORPHEUS IN MAYFAIR
DEAD LETTERS
DIMINUTIVE DRAMAS
LOST DIARIES
ROUND THE WORLD IN ANY NUMBER OF DAYS
THE GREY STOCKING, AND OTHER PLAYS
PASSING BY
OVERLOOKED
THE PUPPET SHOW OF MEMORY
H.M. EMBASSY, AND OTHER PLAYS
A TRIANGLE
C
HILDESHEIM
PUNCH AND JUDY, AND OTHER ESSAYS
HALF A MINUTE'S SILENCE
TRANSLATIONS ANCIENT AND MODERN WITH
ORIGINALS
CAT'S CRADLE
DAPHNE ADEANE
COMFORTLESS MEMORY
TINKER'S LEAVE
WHAT I SAW IN RUSSIA
CECIL SPENCER
ALGAE
THE COAT WITHOUT SEAM

ROBERT PECKHAM

BY
MAURICE BARING



LONDON

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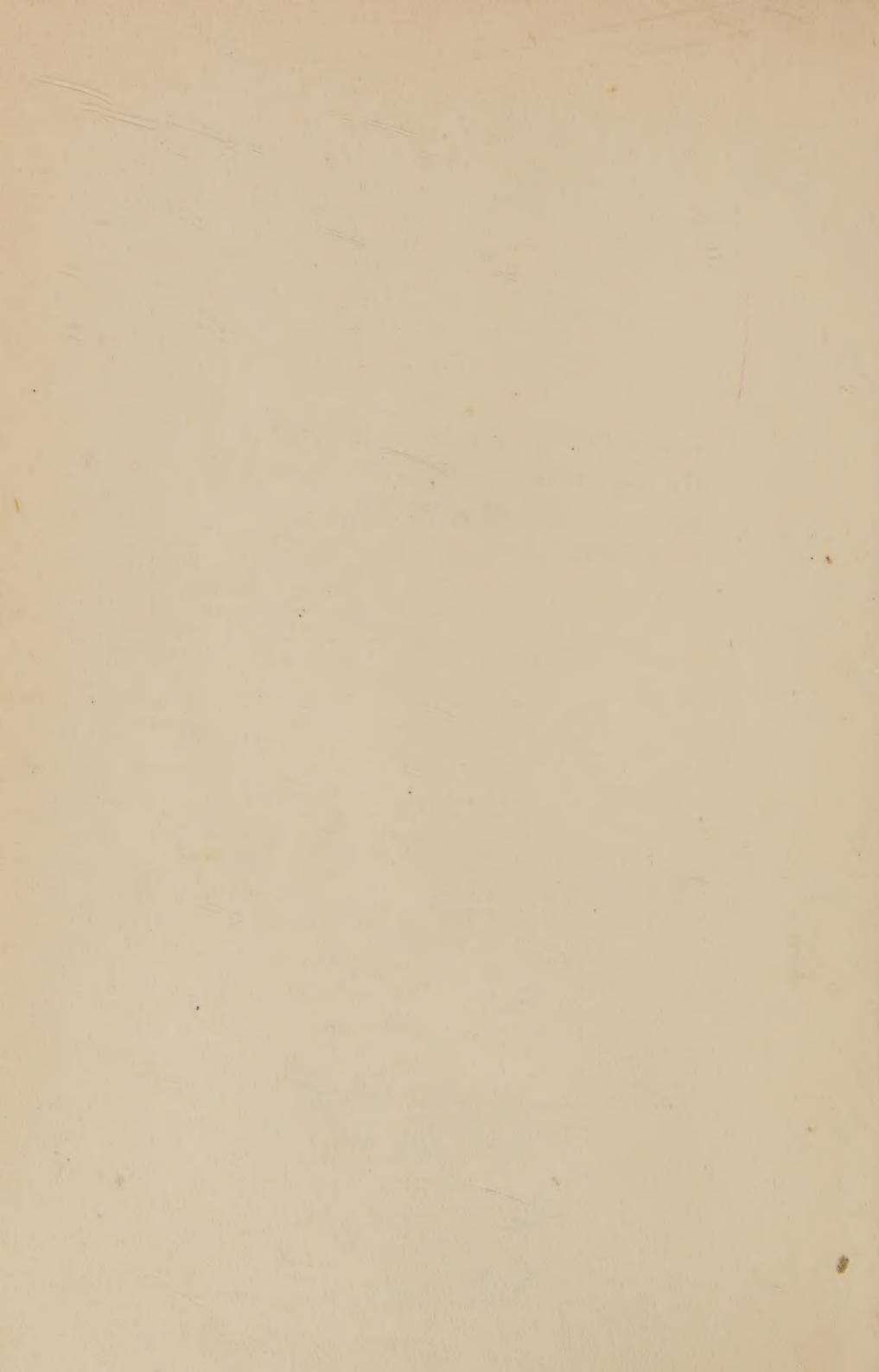
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QUAERENTI



*It is not in the storm nor in the strife
We feel benumb'd and wish to be no more,
But in the after-silence on the shore,
When ail is lost except a little life.*

BYRON



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The Sad History
of
Robert Peckham, of Denham Place,
Buckinghamshire,
sometime Member of Parliament
Knight and Privy Councillor
of Queen Mary,
as set forth by himself,
together with sundry sonnets
letters and papers ;
and an Account of his death at Rome
in 1564
written by his friend
Monsr. Claude Mangot, Jurisconsult.



ROBERT PECKHAM

CHAPTER I

I WAS eight years old when my mother told me the news : the King had granted my father a Manor. I wondered what a Manor meant, but I never asked, and maybe my mother was sure that I knew, for she never spoke of it again.

Hitherto we had lived at Nevill in the woods of Surrey. We were to leave Nevill ; we were to travel far away to another county in the North, to Yorkshire, to a house called Mount Grace, near Ferrybridge. Mount Grace was in older times one of the lesser Priories which were dissolved by Cardinal Wolsey.

I was pleased at the news at first, until I understood that to go to a new place was to leave the old.

It was my sister, Amphillis, who was a year

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older than I, who brought home that truth to me. It was I who told her the news, thinking to please her. To my surprise, she wept.

When the moment came when we must leave Nevill for ever, I shared her grief. We were to leave the well-appointed farm, and its rose garden, with its alleys, and walks, and aromatic herbs ; the meadows, and the corn-field beyond the road.

When and how the journey happened, I do not recall : nor whether we went straight there, or first to London. For my father had a house in London, and, indeed, it was there that I was born. I cannot remember arriving at the new house, but I still see its walls, the cloister, the chapel, the lofty hall, hung with a fine arras, the long gallery with small windows, and the huge beds. The migration to Mount Grace, although the arrival to me is dim, was the first event in my life, and the first true sadness. It was the first taste of the fruit of exile which I was to become so sharply familiar with.

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Nobody guessed this ; none suspected it, but Amphillis. We thought our parents mad to have left our southern home to come to this bleak place of moors and wind, to this large, friendless house. The new house was larger and more spacious, but the garden was bare save for a few stunted fruit trees which grew in front of the house.

Amphillis and I shared our grief in silence. And there was something else to share. The new house frightened us. We heard the servants talking about something in whispers, and they ceased talking abruptly, or changed the subject, as soon as we were in hearing. One day Amphillis heard one of them say to another, “Abbey lands,” and shake her head.

And one day the gardener’s son, Jasper, whispered to me that a monk walked the terrace on All-hallowe’en. There was no need of ghost or spook to frighten us in the new house. There was a chest which it was a terror to pass, and the image of St. Edward, bearded and crowned, outside the chapel, whose eyes

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seemed to blink. We lay awake in fear at nights. It was in July that Jasper told us his secret, and we prayed that something might happen to remove us from Mount Grace before All-hallowe'en should come round. Jasper told me that on All-hallowe'en the wraiths of those who were to die during the year visited the churchyard. The churchyard was near by the house. The church adjoined the house, and was separated from it by a few yards.

I told Amphillis this piece of news, but none of my brothers. George was two years younger than myself, and Henry, and Edward the youngest, were still babies. Amphillis shared the secret with me. Her feelings were mixed between the terror and the pride of sharing so dark a secret. At first the secret weighed upon us, and kept us awake at nights, but with the fecklessness of children we lived it down. It became eclipsed by more vivid events. It was in autumn, when we had almost forgotten about this, that my mother recalled it to us by saying that Uncle Anselm would be

with us for All-hallow Day. Uncle Anselm was a priest. We had seen him but rarely, but we spoke of him with awe. He was a younger brother of my father's, a man of learning, and the friend of Cardinal Wolsey, to whom he had acted in his youth as secretary. Uncle Anselm had lived many years of his life in foreign lands, in France and Italy, and to us he was more of a legend than a human being. There was something mysterious about his arrival at this time. It was talked about by our elders, but not before us, and we scented the concealment.

He arrived earlier than we expected at the end of greasing time, and sang Mass on the Feast of St. Michael. His face was oval, and pale as wax ; his eyes grey, and seemed to be looking into the beyond ; but when he asked you a question or when you answered his question, they lit up and pierced you like an arrow of light. We were frightened of him ; he seemed to be there and not to be there ; to look at nothing and to see everything ; to be nowhere and to be everywhere, and never to

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waste a word. It was after he had been with us about a month—towards the end of October—that one morning when I served his Mass, at six of the clock, I thought he seemed as if he were about to faint, so wan was he, so frail, almost as if he were transparent, like an alabaster lamp in which a taper burned. After Mass he retired to his room, and Amphillis and I heard my mother say to my father that “poor Anselm . . .” and then they stopped, and my father pursed his lips in a manner which he only did when someone was in trouble or danger. We knew the look, and Amphillis said to me, “Father thinks that Uncle Anselm is going to die.”

There was talk and a whispering going on all that day, and we children knew that something was afoot which was being kept from us.

Two days before All-hallowe'en, Jasper told us that another guest was due, and he looked knowingly, but told us no more. On the day before All-hallowe'en I was in the chapel at four of the clock in the morning to serve Mass,

and I had lit the Altar candles. I waited, and no one came. Then presently Hester, my nurse, was there, and taking me by the arm, hurried me out of the chapel, saying that Uncle Anselm would not say Mass as he was sick, and that Master Heathcote, our Chaplain, would say Mass later. I was not to serve.

I was taken upstairs, and Amphillis greeted me with the words, "What has happened?" She knew that something had happened. Later on in the day we were told that Uncle Anselm was sick, and later that he was dead.

His body was laid in an open coffin in the chapel. Master Heathcote knelt beside it, praying. Amphillis and I were taken to see him. Uncle Anselm lay there white as ivory, but no paler than he had been when alive. There was a smile of inscrutable content upon his face, and he seemed to be sleeping happily, like one in possession of a precious secret, who is confidently awaiting a happy event.

I was affrighted at the thought of seeing the corpse, and yet, not without a dreadful delight,

I nursed my terror ; but when I saw the body this fright was taken from me. At night the coffin was carried to the church with torches and with singing, and it was set in the Lady Chapel, with tapers of wax around it, and many of the poor watched about the bier and held torches and tapers in their hands. Master Heathcote and others sang dirge all night, and Mass at four of the clock in the morning.

But Amphillis and myself knew there was some other thing in the air besides this sudden happening, momentous as that was in itself. The stranger we had been told of arrived later on in the day, after the dinner hour, which was late, at four of the clock, at afternoon. Amphillis and I watched his arrival from an upper window. He came riding up on a mule, accompanied by one other and four servants. He was a grey-haired man, bent and sick-looking, a cleric, but he was taller and stouter in build than Uncle Anselm. We saw him later, and were told to kiss his ring, so we guessed he must be a Bishop, or at least an

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Abbot. But William Orchard, the groom, on the first opportunity, told us in a whisper that he was none other than Cardinal Wolsey, who had come from Cawood Castle to visit Uncle Anselm, but death had baulked them of their meeting in this world.

Amphillis and I slept in one room, next door to Hester, who slept with the younger children. The door between the two rooms was left open. I fell asleep as soon as I laid me down, and although the dreaded All-hallowe'en had come, I no longer thought about it with fear. The fear of that day had been wiped out by the nearer happenings ; the death of Uncle Anselm, and the arrival of the Cardinal. Now that I had looked upon a dead person, and my Uncle Anselm in death was so little different from what he had been in life, I was no longer afeared of meeting a ghost.

I do not know what time it was when I awoke with a start. Amphillis was asleep. I arose from bed and listened by the half-open door, where my nurse and the others were

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sleeping, and I heard no voices, yet I knew surely that I had been awakened by some sound. I was frightened, but in spite of my terror I knew I must obey some hidden command, like one who has been bound by a spell. I opened the door and walked down the passage ; and presently I found myself opening a small door which led from the hall to the courtyard. I crossed the yard, still as one under obedience, and walked straight to the church door. I opened it and entered. The church was full of lights, but there was no chanting, nor sound of dirge, nor did I mark any of the canons. I walked towards the Lady Chapel, where I knew that my uncle was lying. My heart was cold with fear and yet I was impelled by a silent command which I could not gainsay.

When I entered the chapel I saw the Cardinal standing beside the bier, and Uncle Anselm sitting straight up in his coffin, talking with animation, like a foreigner, which happened to him at times, when he was agitated,

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from having lived much abroad. I swooned, and when I regained my senses I found myself in the house, in the passage, near the guest chamber, where the Cardinal was sleeping. I had roused the servant who slept across his door, by my screams so he said. Torches and tapers were lit and the Cardinal came out of his room. He was fully dressed and the torch-light gleamed on the large blue stone in his ring. He took me in his arms and soothed me, gentle and benevolent, and said there was nothing to fear. I wept, and I was about to speak when the Cardinal put his finger to his lips and said : "That is all over now." My mother, my father, and Hester, came out, and the Cardinal told them that I had been walking in my sleep. I said, through my tears, that there were robbers in the house, knowing that a tale of ghosts would not be believed. I was carried back to bed, to Hester's room, and my father said it was shameful that a child of my age should be so cowardly ; and my mother and Hester both said that I was

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over-tired. I did not sleep again until the dawn broke, but I was allowed to lie in bed after daybreak, as it was thought that I was ailing ; and the next day the apothecary came and gave me physic.

I know not to this day whether what I saw so clearly was a dream or not.

That morning of All-hallowe'en Day, after singing Mass, the Cardinal took leave of my father, and he gave us all his blessing. As he did so, there were tears in his eyes, and he said he feared never to see us again.

The news of his arrival, in spite of the secrecy, had been noised abroad in the village, and as he left there was a multitude of children by the bridge imploring his confirmation and calling out “God save your Grace ! God save your Grace !” My father was displeased at this, but the Cardinal confirmed them all.

After these happenings the terrors of Mount Grace were increased for me tenfold, nor do I know how I could have endured them had they not been put an end to by my being sent

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to school in London. The word Manor had become fearful to me. I remember one day asking Amphillis what "Manor" meant, as all I knew was that Mount Grace was a Manor, and she told me that a Manor was a King's gift. I remember no sadness in saying farewell when I started for London with my father, although I was sad at leaving Amphillis, despite our frequent quarrels, and William Orchard, who had taught me to ride, and Jasper. My father was then still a stranger to us, and my mother's chief care had been for my younger brothers; for I was the eldest son, and William would often tell me that I must remember that when I grew up I would be Lord of the Manor.

Before the month was ended, the Cardinal died at the Abbey of Leicester.

CHAPTER II

IT was while I was at school in London that my father moved to Southlands, a Manor, which had once belonged to an Abbey, in the County of Buckinghamshire. Our nearest neighbour was Lord Bray, who lived at Biddlesden with his wife. They had one daughter, Mary. I had first met her as a child when we were at Nevill, and I saw her later when I was a schoolboy, little guessing that my father and my mother had planned a match between us, and that both families had agreed that we were to be married when we were grown up. After that I did not see her for many years. She was sent to France, and was brought up in a convent. I met her again when I was a student at Gray's Inn, at home during the summer. I was then eighteen years old, and she a year younger. She was



brought by her father and mother to Southlands, and my father told me what had been determined.

Mary had beauty then, and promised yet more. Her head was proudly set up upon her shoulders and her dark eyes dazzled.

After the momentous news had been revealed to me by my father, and by her mother to her, we were left alone in the garden. It was in July, and we walked between the yew hedges as the afternoon moved on in a mellow curve. Mary had been the star of my boyhood, and when my father told me that I was to marry her I was not surprised. It seemed in the course of nature, an end which I had always looked forward to.

“This,” I said to myself, “is love.” I asked her to be my wife, and she seemed to take the matter in the manner I did. There was no espousal, for the marriage was not to be until I came of age. I went back to London, and two years later I was called to the Bar. During this time I saw Mary every now and

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again. All seemed to be ordered ; I had no fear for the future ; I loved Mary ; she loved me ; we would be married, and live, so I thought, happily for ever afterwards.

Then came the month of my coming of age. Preparations were made at Southlands for the festivities. About three weeks before the solemn day, which fell in August, I was bidden to Biddlesden to dine there. Lord Bray was away at Court, Lady Bray alone with her daughter. Lady Bray was an old lady, small and wizened, learned and shrewd. Mary had been strictly brought up ; she spoke Latin and Italian, and she was said to be pious.

During dinner we exchanged but few words. Afterwards we were left to ourselves, and walked in the garden. I addressed her, and Mary answered aloof as it were, as though she were talking with a stranger. She smiled at me, but her smile kept me at a distance.

At last I dared to ask her whether aught had happened. She shook her head, and we were both silent. I was relieved of my fear.

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I spoke to her of the festivities that were to be held so soon, and laughed over some trivial matters that had taken place during the preparations. She listened in silence. At last she told me she could not attend the festivities.

I asked her whether it were because she no longer loved me. She told me her heart had not changed, but that we never could be married.

I was amazed by these words. Something fatal seemed to have come to pass. And yet I know now that this cloud was different from true despair. She said that she was going to foreign parts and about to leave the world altogether, and go into a nunnery. I was amazed, and I remember saying, "Where?" It was to have been Denny, in Cambridgeshire, but the nuns had been driven away, so it was to be Flanders—Bruges. Protest died upon my lips, and the sentences of reassurance which my heart whispered to me were of no avail.

I asked her whether she were sure in her

mind of her decision. She said she must try. It might not be God's will. If she failed she would come back to the world ; but her mind was settled.

I asked her whether her mother and father knew of this determination. She had not yet told them, but she was sure they would not oppose her.

I protested, but in vain. She said I would soon forget her. Then with vehement denial I begged her to promise me one thing. If it should prove to be God's will, as it well might be, that she was to come back to the world, to come back to me.

She was willing to promise. She asked me if I could wait two years. The question seemed idle ! At last she said that were she to come back to the world she would come back to me, but that I must promise her something as well : If in the meanwhile I grew to love another, I must promise to tell her. I vowed no such thing could happen, but she asked me to swear to tell her, and not to marry

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her, when I loved another rather than keep my word to her. I said I could only swear one thing, to be true to her ; that if she came back to the world she would find me awaiting her. That and no more I could swear by all that was most holy.

“ And if there should be someone else, to tell me all ? ” she said.

I vowed there could be no one else.

At that moment the chapel bell rang for prayer, and I bade her farewell, and she led me to the house. Lady Bray met us on the terrace. As I took my leave I said that my father and my mother were looking forward to her presence at my birthday feast. She smiled, and said she hoped to be there.

I rode home as one in a dream. I knew that in Mary, underneath the grace of the surface, there was something as strong if not as hard as a stone. I had more than once met with something unbending, and I had heard my mother, who saw clear into the human heart, say that Mary had the makings of a great saint

or a great sinner. A great saint? Yes, indeed, I thought. But a great sinner? Surely my mother must be wrong there? Did Mary herself harbour any such foreboding? Was she leaving me and the world to escape from peril?

When I reached home that evening, years seemed to have gone by. At supper I was silent, and my mother marked it. She sat looking at me with her grave eyes, but said nothing. My father marked nothing. He was thinking of the festivities of the morrow. My brothers were boisterous and so much occupied in teasing one another that they took no notice of me. We had evening prayers, and retired to bed: and as I bade my mother good-night, she asked me in a whisper whether all was not well.

I said I was but a little weary.

I went to bed, but not to sleep. I lay awake, and although there was a heaviness on my limbs, sleep would not come to me. The face of Mary was ever before me. Could it be

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that she loved someone else ? No ! Mary was not deceitful. Was her deed an act of reparation, made in return for the evil that was being done to the nuns in taking their homes from them ? Mary was likely to make just such a sacrifice, to offer just such an act of reparation. I could not blame her. I suspected that there was secret cause for blame in what was happening around me. My father and my mother were devout Catholics, but the supremacy of the King was never spoken of. I hoped that my father had accepted this but as a fitful move on the part of his Grace, the fruit of his feud with the Pope over the divorce and the second marriage ; and now that the Queen had been beheaded, perhaps all might blow over and come right in the end.

Then came the suppression of the lesser religious houses, and their spoliation. About this again my father said little ; but when he did speak of it, he defended the policy of the King.

His love of his country was the flame of his

life. The suppression of the houses was, he said, the policy of Wolsey. Moreover, it was right that these lesser houses should be merged into the greater, and give way to larger and more useful foundations. The lesser religious houses were nests for drones and some of them gave scandal. They were all of them useless ; the future lay with the schools and universities.

Howsoever that might be, I knew my father would never question anything the King might do. He would lay down his life for any of the Tudors, at any moment.

Yet when the news came of the suffering of Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More, my father had remained silent for three days. I was perplexed about these matters. I could not but reflect that the very land where we had lived in the north, and where we were now living in the south, had once belonged to Abbeys ; and was this right ? Were we right to sail with the wind, or should we be overtaken by some storm, some unguessed of retribution ? Was it for this that Mary was leaving me ?

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I heard the church clock strike at midnight. Towards dawn I fell asleep, and I was visited by a dream.

I dreamed I was watching an Abbey, an Abbey which I had never seen before, and two men with torches came and set fire to it. They were masked men, and the flames leapt round the Abbey walls, and devoured them ; and they crumbled into ashes ; and I heard a voice saying, “ You have burned down the House of God.” Then one of the masked men walked away, and his gait reminded me of my father. The other remained, and I asked him to take off his mask. He did, and lo ! it was my own face. I awoke in terror.

I heard footsteps along the passage. There was a tap at the door, and my mother came into the room, bearing a taper in her hand. She thought she had heard me calling.

I told her I had been visited by dreams, which had awakened me. She sat down by my bed.

“ I know that something has been troubling

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you of late," she said. "Tell me about it. Is it a lovers' quarrel?"

I told her what had happened. That it was all over for ever. That Mary was going to leave me and to bid farewell to the world: to be a nun.

"To try her vocation," my mother corrected me.

I said I knew that if she determined to be a nun, a nun she would be. My mother said that such things depended not only on the mortal will but on the will of God. God chose His nuns himself. She did not doubt Mary's good faith nor her present desire. I charged her with having small love for Mary. She disclaimed all dislike, but she said there was a difference between the liking of someone and wishing for her as a wife for one's son.

I asked her why she had chosen her for me, and I pressed her to say what she had against Mary.

"What," asked my mother, "has she got against herself?" I did not read her meaning,

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and she explained to me that she believed Mary to be running away from herself. She was sure Mary had faith and would always have faith : but she suspected that her soul was unruly and rebellious, and she thought Mary was aware of this and afraid of it, afraid of herself. Her heart was less warm than her senses. I was angered at this saying, and my mother said I must forgive her, but if Mary loved me, she would not go away. I protested a vocation was said to be more than the greatest love, and often befell, so I had heard, those who have loved most. My mother repeated my words.

“ Those who have loved most.”

I charged her once more with her disbelief in Mary. She said that Mary did not love me as much as I loved her ; and when I asked her if she thought the heart of Mary were cold, she said no, but her blood is hot. I protested that my love would be unchanging and undying, and my mother wept and stroked my hand and bade me try to sleep. I shut my

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eyes and made believe I was sleeping, and presently my mother left me.

The next three weeks passed for me in a moment. I lived through them as one in a dream. My mother respected my aloofness, and refrained from questioning me. The night before my birthday I again spent a restless night, disturbed by dreams, ending in a troubled sleep which was presently broken by the stir and bustle of the household making ready for the festivities. I woke up, and dressed, thinking that I was about to spend the most miserable day of my life in the midst of the noise of the guests and the gaiety. First of all there were gifts and compliments offered, and an address and a poem in Latin composed and read out by Master Heathcote. Then came the banquet, and after that was ended, dancing and music.

Mary was not present. Her mother had come without her, and made excuse for her absence, saying she had suddenly been visited by a touch of fever.

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Among the guests there was a neighbouring squire, Master Brooke, who had one daughter, Joan. They were both present that day. Mistress Brooke was but seventeen years old. She was fair, with light eyes, and a clear nobility of countenance. When the banquet was ended, the guests danced while the minstrels played in the gallery, and I chose Mistress Brooke for my partner.

I danced with her more than once.

When the feast was over, and the guests had gone home, when prayers were ended I bade good-night to my father and mother and I went to my room and gazed out of the casement on to the field where the corn was ripening. There was a road beneath the casement window, and then the cornfield, and hanging over the road a large oak tree. The moon was full that night. I leant out of the casement and sighed. My mind would never alter, I said to myself.

Years afterwards, when my mother died, I was left, among other things, a small book in which she wrote her thoughts or copied

phrases which she had heard or read. One page bore the date of my birthday, and read as follows :—

“ Robert’s coming of age, August, 1536. Robert wore his black and crimson doublet, black hose, and white ruff. He trod a measure with Joan Brooke. She seemed to please him. At least for a while she distracted him from his heaviness.”

Then there was a space.

“ Joan Brooke would make a good wife.”

Further on :

“ May it be God’s will that Mary prove a good nun ; but I doubt if she will ever make a good wife.”

On the next page there was a prayer :

“ God give Robert an untarnished soul, and a loyal heart ; and may he never cease to serve his God, never fail to pay honour to the Mother of God and to the Saints ; and may he serve his King and his Country loyally, and do well in the eyes of men ; and acquire honour and reap good opinion from those whose praise is of

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value. But may he ever put the things that belong to God before the business and baubles of this world ; and if the twain should ever come into conflict, may he not falter nor hesitate, but choose readily and follow the narrow path to the end, albeit it lead to disaster and disgrace—even unto death.”

CHAPTER III

IN the autumn of the year I came of age, I left Oxford and went with my father to London. He lived at Blackfriars, and I was called to the Bar. I lived a whole year in London, and during that time I did not once see Mistress Brooke, for she had gone to Court to be one of the new Queen's ladies. And during that year my sister married one John Gifford and left us to live in Suffolk, and so passed out of my life ; for she died at the birth of her first born and I never saw her more. In August of the following year I followed my father to Southlands. At the beginning of the Michaelmas term the Queen gave birth to a son, and died herself a fortnight later. Mistress Brooke returned to her father. At Christmas our families were once again

gathered together at Southlands, and Squire Brooke brought his daughter to our house at the New Year, and my father, myself, and my brothers returned the visit on Twelfth Night. On this occasion, I had chance for talk and interchange of compliment with Mistress Brooke. Compliment grew into confidence, confidence ripened into intimacy. We met frequently. I still thought that my heart was broken, but as the weeks went by, I became aware little by little that a day on which I did not see Mistress Brooke seemed empty and desolate.

I went once more to London for the Hilary term, and this time the leave-taking from Southlands seemed sharper than heretofore.

I returned to Southlands for a space of time in the summer, and again at Christmas, and my visits to Brooke Hall became as frequent as I could make them. Our public interviews were lined with a secret intimacy to which we alone were privy. Indeed this was hardly needed, for our eyes and our looks, and the accents of our words conveyed a whole

world of meaning. This passed unmarked, save alone maybe by my mother, and by another, a certain Ralph Wriothesley, the son of a neighbour of ours, with a handsome presence, impaired by a certain slyness in his eyes and persuasion of manner. He had for a time been a pretender to the hand of Mistress Brooke, and had declared himself, but she would have none of him. Jealousy now sharpened his instincts, and he divined what was passing between myself and her. He knew of the match that had nearly come to pass between myself and the daughter of Lord Bray. He was presently to leave England for Paris, where he was to be attached to the King's Ambassador. But before going, he made an appeal to Mistress Brooke. He had more to offer than I. He was acknowledged to be a man of parts. His father was a man of property, which had become richer by the addition of lands and treasure robbed from certain Abbeys. He was ambitious, and he had determined to

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play a part in the world. He needed the aid of a comely wife who should be a woman of understanding.

His opportunity came on Twelfth Night. There was a feast at Brooke Hall, and we listened to the minstrels and to the carol singers. Mistress Brooke had shunned him so far, but he at last contrived to snatch an interview. She related this to me afterwards. He spoke of his coming departure and journey, and asked her to be his wife, saying that he had always loved her. He professed to have a good heart, to have scholarship, and a comfortable fortune to offer. He begged her to come with him and eclipse the beauties of France. Nobody, he told her, could love her as well as he, and few could offer her more.

She thanked him for the compliment, but vowed that she was unwilling to give him her hand.

He took leave of Mistress Brooke, but he did not leave the Hall. He contrived, before he said good-night to the Squire, to

have a few words with myself. He told me that he was bound for Paris, and that he was travelling by way of the Netherlands. I asked him if this were not the longest route.

“I have a mission at Antwerp,” said he, “and I wish to see the town of Bruges.”

I said nothing ; and shortly afterwards he took his leave.

Before the Christmas holidays were at an end, Master Brooke bade me to a day’s hawking. We had returned and supped, and the Squire had fallen asleep in front of the fire. Mistress Clewes, who after her mother’s death had had the care of Mistress Brooke, had retired. Master Brooke was lying back in a chair, with two dogs at his feet, and his daughter and myself retired to the large bay window.

It was here, at the hour of the wintry half-light, that I spoke my heart to Joan. I asked her to be my wife ; but before I did so, I told her the whole tale of my betrothal to Mary. She had known of the match, but not of what had passed between us. She said to me :

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“ If Mary comes back, you must needs marry her.”

“ She will not come back,” I said. “ But were she to return, would it be wise, honest, or right, to marry her when I love someone else, and not her? She asked me to promise I would not do that.”

“ If she comes back,” said she, “ it will be for one reason only. To marry you, and you will needs do it.”

I confessed that I could not do it now.

“ If Mary were to come back,” she said, “ can you tell her that you have changed your heart? ”

I was silent.

“ I accept your offer,” she said, “ on this one condition. If Mary becomes a nun I will marry you; but if Mary comes back, you must marry her.”

At that moment Master Brooke awoke, and our converse was at an end. I said good-night, and rode home.

It was a week later my mother visited Lady

Bray, and came home with the news that Mary was still happy in her convent and had determined to become a nun. In the middle of January, I went to London with my father for the Hilary term. I could not meet Joan again before Easter. At Easter my father returned to Southlands. Joan was once more at Brooke Hall. We reached home early in the evening, and we had not been long in the house when I was told by my mother that Mary Bray had come to Biddlesden from Bruges.

Mary, she said, was not going to be a nun. She knew she had no vocation. And the Mistress of the Novices had said she was right : that she was better fitted to live in the world.

I was silent. My mother looked away. Although I had never spoken to her of Joan, she knew full well what had taken place.

She told me she had received a letter from Lady Bray, asking me to dine with her on the morrow.

I was silent during the rest of that day. My

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father and my mother respected my silence. My brothers were both of them away. I spent the rest of the day brooding over the riddle. What was I to do? Where did my duty lie? Should I wed Mary, whom I did not love, while I loved another; or should I marry Joan, whom I loved, and break my word?

I had sworn to be faithful to Mary. And she had implored me if ever I loved another to tell her. I had never been willing to admit that this could be; and now it had come to pass. Should I obey the wish which she had made clear? Ought I not to tell her that I loved Joan? Had I the right to marry her when I loved someone else, when she had foreseen the circumstance? Or was this a cheating play of words? Was I pleading this as a pretext and even an argument to excuse and to defend my inclination? Was it not rather my duty to sacrifice my love for Joan, if Mary's heart were still unchanged? But that would mean sacrificing Joan. Had

I the right to do this?

I turned the question round in my mind, and all in vain. I determined to consult Master Heathcote. I found him in his room poring over a Latin book.

Master Heathcote had the innocence of a child. He had no claim to invention or to learning, and no ambition, save to serve the family which he was attached to, and to do his daily duty. He had never been known to speak unkindly, or to do an uncharitable act, and his life was spent in obedience and service. He never questioned the decisions of his superiors, nor uttered an opinion on the affairs of State that were agitating the minds of men.

He bade me unburden my soul.

I remember telling him I did not mind what I told him provided he did not mind listening.

“I can listen,” he said, and his eyes twinkled.

He had indeed had a fair share of listening.

I told him the story, and when I had finished he said there was nothing binding

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between me and the one or the other. There were no *sponsoria*. He asked me whether I had promised Mary that if I ever loved anyone else I would tell her?

I told him I had refused to make this promise, because I said there never could be a need for it ; and now the need had arisen.

He said there was no obligation either way. I must pray to God, and to the Mother of God, and ask my Patron Saint to pray for me. And then I might cast lots, as the Apostles did for the election of the successor to Judas.

When I left Master Heathcote, the difficulty which faced me seemed as perplexing as before.

CHAPTER IV

I WAS resolved when I woke up the next morning on a clean shrift ; to tell Mary the whole truth. To act otherwise must only lead to misfortune ; and she herself had begged me to tell her the truth should there be cause for it. I had not promised to do this, yet I was bound, because, not having been willing to believe in any such necessity, I had by implication made the promise.

In the afternoon I rode to Biddlesden in time for dinner. I was welcomed by Lady Bray and Mary, who were awaiting me in the garden.

Mary had changed but little ; she had increased in comeliness. She greeted me, and spoke no word of the past.

When dinner was ended, Lady Bray asked

Mary to take me to the garden, saying she would join us presently. We walked between the box-hedges towards the sundial.

I told her we had heard that she was happy in her convent.

She had said she was happy, she answered, but it was not the truth. She had no vocation. She knew she would never have a vocation. The reason she had left home was to test herself and to test me. She had felt almost secure of me ; but she thought that I might do without her, and that if she went away in a manner which must seem to me irrevocable, I should see clear into my own heart. I would know once and for ever whether she were all in all to me, whether I wished to keep my promise, or whether it was such a promise as is brittle and short-lived.

When she had spoken there was silence. I knew the moment had come for me to speak out or for ever to hold my peace. I was about to speak but she put up her hand.

She asked to have her say. She said it

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had been a sacrifice for her to leave home, but that now she was glad she had made it. When at our last meeting she had begged me should my heart change to tell her, she had feared the change might come all too soon. If she had wronged me in thought, she now craved forgiveness. The past two years had been a purgatory for her ; she had suffered apprehension, jealousy and fear, and yet she had hoped I might be true to her and that she might find me awaiting her when she came back, and that I would say : "Here am I as I said I would be." If she had guessed rightly I could speak to my parents and hers whenever I pleased, but not for another day, because she had sworn to herself that she would give me twenty-four hours to weigh the matter, after she had come back.

I was once more about to speak ; but she checked me. On the morrow, she said, if I were in the same mind, I could send her word to say I would tell my parents, and if my mind was changed, I was to say no word ; she would

understand and never blame me.

“Even if there is no new person,” she said, “your heart may have suffered a change, after these two years.”

As Mary said these words, I knew that a door had closed upon my life, that there was no longer an escape. While she had been talking she had led me towards the terrace, where Lady Bray was awaiting us. I took my leave.

I rode home in perplexity. I thought I might be able to write in a letter what I had been unable to speak ; but I knew in my heart that I would not be able to write. Providence had given me the opportunity. I had turned from it and missed it for ever.

When I reached home I found a letter awaiting me. It was from Mistress Brooke. She had a piece of unexpected news for me : she was betrothed. She was to wed Anthony Restwold, the son of Sir Anthony Restwold of Hedsor Manor. She asked for my wishes and prayers.

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I understood. Joan had foreseen what would happen, and had unravelled the tangled skein for me, or rather she had cut it. My mother had heard of the betrothal, she did not know what had befallen, but she knew that there was a recess which she lacked the key of, a mystery which was to her forbidden. She knew that I loved Joan, she thought that Joan loved me. She knew little of Anthony Restwold. My father said he was one of the brightest of the Court gallants, an officer in the King's Body Guard, reckless and debonair, but without purpose; a contrast to myself. Had he taken Joan by storm? Then, if now, why not before? For Joan was beyond all reasonable and wise and not inclined to sudden whim.

That evening before evening prayer I took my mother aside, and said that I had news of importance for her: I was betrothed to Mary. That I had plighted troth, before she went away, when she had told me she might come back, and that I had vowed to wait for

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her—that I had been ready to swear anything, but she had not wished to bind me. She had not allowed me to make a binding vow.

My mother wished me happiness, but her voice faltered.

I knelt down and buried my face in her lap. We both wept. Did my mother know, I wondered, whether my tears were tears of joy or tears of sorrow.

That evening we told my father. He received the news with gladness, and made plans for our future. He knew nothing of what might be present under the surface. The next day he waited upon Lady Bray. They agreed that the espousal should take place incontinent and the wedding at the end of the Trinity Term, in August. Lord Bray was acquainted by letter, and a few days later he was once more at Bray, and in joy at the marriage.

Mistress Brooke and Restwold were married sooner, and set out for London, as Anthony

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must be at Court. I saw her once before the marriage. It was at Brooke Hall. She was smiling and gay, and when I offered her wishes for her happiness, she laughed and said that the life of one who was a soldier and a courtier was no light thing, but there were tears in her eyes when I bade her farewell.

“I pray you may be happy, Robert,” she said. “My heart always told me that events must turn out as they have done, and it is, pray God, for the good. God knows best. Mary is beautiful. You must make her happy.”

I said I would try. She asked me where we would live, and when I said “London,” she said we would meet: but I told her that life at Court and life in the Courts were each from the other far removed.

“Perhaps we shall pass each other on the river. Forget not to greet me if we do,” she said, laughing. Then she became serious once more. “I shall not forget you,” she said.

I wondered what had prompted her. It seemed to me that even if she had been

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charmed by the young courtier, she had also done what she had done to help me. I knew that I could never love anyone as I loved her.

We were walking in the garden, and the picture was long to remain in my mind. It was an April day, and many of the trees were green. She was dressed in her riding clothes, her father was busy somewhere in the garden. We walked up to a basin, in which there was a fountain, and gold fish, saying that Anthony would presently arrive. He was riding from Windsor, and did I know him? I had seen him, I said, once long ago. I must like him, she said, for her sake.

There was a barking of dogs, and a noise of shouting in the distance, and she called to Anthony to come to us in the garden.

Presently he appeared. He ran through the garden to meet us, but stopped when he caught sight of me, and we were made known to each other.

Anthony, with a smile like sunshine and a catching laugh, welcomed me and cursed the

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duties that had delayed him from coming sooner. He was gay and boisterous. I wondered whether one might not be over-weighted after a time by his mirth. At the sound of his laughter, Master Brooke at once pricked up his ears, and joined our group.

Anthony was followed by three greyhounds. Master Brooke at once made friends with them, and began to appraise their points. He and Anthony were soon in discussion about dogs and horses. I said I must go home, and Master Brooke bade me stay and sup with them, but I excused myself, saying they were awaiting me at home.

“I forgot—Robert is betrothed as well,” said Master Brooke with a laugh. “All the countryside is getting married. Well, the more the merrier.”

“And the sooner the better,” said Anthony. Mistress Brooke bade me farewell. And as I bade her farewell I knew that we were both bidding adieu to youth. I rode away into the sunset.

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They were married a week later. I did not attend the wedding. My own marriage took place in August, at the Chapel at Biddlesden. Lord Bray gave Mary some lace and a Missal. Her dowry was slender, as Lord Bray was impoverished, and, whether by accident or design, had received no share of the Church lands.

But my father made up for this by his munificence. He gave to Mary jewels in plenty, and some gold and silver plate, and some finely wrought silks and satins.

Soon after we were married, we went to London, and acquired a house not far from that of my father in Blackfriars.

CHAPTER V

I FIRST became aware of what was to be the captain thread as well as the darkest in the tapestry of my life, soon after my marriage. We led a quiet life at Blackfriars. I was called to the Bar. I was thought well of ; but the work had scant interest for me, because I had not a sufficiency of ambition ; and without ambition a lawyer's life is tedious. In the month of March following our marriage, my wife was delivered of a son, who died soon after he was born, and this common sorrow brought us nearer to each other than we ever had been in the past or than ever we were destined to be in the future. But the dark thread which I have spoken of, and which I had always guessed to be there, first began to be prominent in a way which brooked neither neglect nor

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gainsaying, soon after this event ; it was the estrangement between myself and my father—a barrier which grew up slowly between us, caused by the clash of our opinions in religion, which were, we thought, the same, since both my father and myself each professed to be a good Catholic. It lay in the way each of us fitted his religion to the times.

My father never seemed to me old or young. Early in life he was bald ; he stooped, even when a young man ; he had glinting grey eyes, and a reddish beard ; a live manner, tempered by moments of distraction ; a swift mind, and stiff opinions. He could not brook contradiction, and his conduct was based on a few solid, sharp rules. He was devout ; he heard Mass every day ; he frequented the Sacraments ; he kept fasts and days of abstinence with regularity, and he gave alms. He held the Lutheran Reformers and all heretics in abhorrence.

At the same time, his religion was closely knit with his love of his country and his

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loyalty to the King. He supported the King's suppression of the religious houses. He was the foe of the rebellious movement which broke out in protest at this suppression, and he followed Bishop Gardiner's example : while he was loyal to the Pope, he championed the supremacy of the King.

The contradiction begotten by such opinions was at once perceived by my wife, not perhaps because she was logical or far-sighted, but because, being full of impulse and life, her instinct caused her at once to seek and find the weak link in an argument or the sore spot in a soul. When she pointed out this point of weakness to me, I could but think that she was right ; but I dared say nothing to my father.

My father was in high favour with the King, and this favour waxed daily. Some said it was because my father, being at the Treasury, found the King money when he needed it : but this was a slander of idle tongues : even my father's enemies never denied him his un-

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tarnished honour, his incorruptible honesty.

Two years after our marriage, the King granted Denham Manor to my father. This manor had belonged to the Abbot of Westminster. It contained a manor house and an estate adjoining Southlands. When my father announced to me this news, and told me at the same time that he would make over Southlands to myself and my wife, I was silent. We were walking in the garden of my father's London house by the riverside.

It had been my secret ambition to retire to the country and live the life of a squire among the fields, gardens and books. My father told me the news, and said, "Well?" There was a silence. At length I said :

"Is Denham the King's to give?"

"And whose else should it be, but his Grace's?"

"I have been told that Denham Manor belongs to the Abbot of Westminster, and that it is leased out."

"That is all over," said my father. "The

Abbeys no longer own a superfluity of land—and so much the better. The business of the Church is to exercise spiritual and not temporal authority. Temporal possessions lead to abuse and sloth. The priests have choked the Church with worldliness, like the thorns in the parable."

"Yes, sir," I answered, "but when once we nibble at the pillars of the Church's dominion, where will we end? See what is happening in the Germanies. They say the same thing will soon be happening in France."

"The spiritual authority of the church has naught to do with ownership, possessions, or riches," said he. "What is happening across the water has nothing to do with us. We have a good Catholic and a rare theologian on the throne. Do not the Six Articles prove it?"

I said I saw no surety for the future. One day the wind blew from the north, another from the south; at one moment we were looking towards France, and the next towards the Emperor. My father said this was Cromwell's doing, and that he had already paid half

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of the penalty, and was on the way to pay the whole of it. Cromwell was at that moment imprisoned in the Tower.

“ That bears me out,” I said. “ Who ever served the King more faithfully than Cromwell? He was as faithful a servant in the King’s work of destruction as the Cardinal was in his work of up-building.”

My father frowned.

“ Robert,” he said, “ have a care. Not a word against his Grace. If a son of mine were inclined to be treasonable, I should, were he ten thousand times my son, bring him to justice. If you have no liking for Southlands, you need not live there: but I will not have you say a word in my presence which would even be construed as a slight upon his Grace.”

I said that I was as loyal a subject as any in the Kingdom, but that I was loyal to the Church as well.

“ The one loyalty,” my father answered, “ includes the other. You cannot be a good Catholic without you be a loyal subject.”

“Pray God,” I said, “that may always remain true !”

“It will be,” he answered, “as long as we have a King to rule us and as long as I am alive.”

When I told my wife of my father’s visit and of his gift, she was pleased at first and clapped her hands in childish joy. She then asked whether Denham were not Abbey land. I told her the truth, and that we could not refuse Southlands without offending my father ; nor could he refuse the King’s gift. As I said this my sister’s words, said to me as a child, came back to me : “A manor is a king’s gift.”

She said he could in no wise refuse the King’s gift. She feared there were but few that would. Those who would had suffered on the scaffold.

I said that men must act each according to his own conscience. The first duty of an Englishman, in my father’s eyes, was loyalty to the King.

It was the most prudent policy to-day, said

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she, not without sharpness, for one who wished to save his head.

“ My father,” I answered hotly, “ fears no man and no man’s opinion, however perilous. He will always obey the voice of his conscience.”

“ I know that to be true,” she said. “ But it is a happy accident that his opinions chime with those of the King.”

I said it was happy, but in no wise out of the ordinary.

She asked me whether my opinions were those of the King ?

I said that I was a loyal subject, that my service was the King’s, but my soul and my religion my own, quoting the words of one worthier than I.

This talk left me uneasy. I had no liking for the Royal policy. I thought the King’s assumption of the title “ Head of the Church ” a mistake, and perhaps a disaster. I thought the suppression of the religious houses an act of spoliation, and the execution of More,

Fisher and the Carthusian monks wicked and wanton as the deeds of the Roman Emperors. I wondered sometimes in secret whether the King were not at times possessed by a devil. I thought, moreover, that his policy, albeit the welfare of the State, the spur of necessity and honesty of purpose might be pleaded, must at the end bring calamity to the Church.

But what profit was there in thinking thus ? And to whom could I say such things ? Least of all to my father ; and not to my wife. To my father such ideas would appear treasonable. My wife would consent to them, and be overjoyed at their expression, but she could not understand the reasons that prompted them. She could not make a nice distinction. She was the partisan or the bitter foe of an idea. Religion was all that was to her of import. She could not understand a half-measure : in the world there were saints and sinners. In her heart she knew that the King was a heretic, but she dared not say so to me. Therefore I dared not talk of these matters with her. Master

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Heathcote would not talk of State policy, and the other priests whom we knew were blind followers either of Gardiner or of Cranmer. Thus it was, perforce, that I kept my thoughts to myself.

While I was pondering over these questions, and finding no answer, I was surprised by a visit of a friend of my college days, Andrew Hynd. Andrew had been sent, soon after I came of age, to be attached to the King's Ambassador in Paris, and afterwards to the Germanies, where he visited the Court of the Emperor. He had now returned, bearing despatches to the King, and he was awaiting orders to be sent abroad again before long.

Andrew Hynd was of the same age as myself. He was a scholar by nature, and had been anxious to become a fellow of one of the colleges at Oxford ; but his father had said that he should go abroad, and he had been trained in the knowledge of foreign tongues. He spoke little, but observed much ; and one could not for long be unaware of his quiet,

watchful mind, or of the nobility of his long eyes and white hands.

I greeted my old friend with joy, and persuaded him to stay and dine. After we had dined, Mary retired to her room, and left us to walk and talk in the garden. We had not seen each other for over four years. I thought Andrew had changed but little. He was serene as ever. He told me of what he had done and seen in the Germanies. I talked of the religious doings in those parts and France, and asked how the Reformers were progressing there.

He told me the Reformers had all they needed in the Germanies, and nothing and nobody would ever be able to wrest from them what they now possessed. In France they had made less progress. That was to come. The sister of the King made a show of being a Huguenot, whether from fashion or persuasion, and some of the most powerful families in France were of the same way of thinking. But at present the King had the upper hand, and

a Huguenot would risk the stake by declaring himself. This could not continue, and soon, he said, we should see France as free from the dominion of the Pope as the Germanies were to-day—as may be England would be later.

I was surprised, and asked him whether he thought the Reformers were in the true path. He said he thought they were right in a measure, but that like all ardent souls, they went the pace too swiftly.

I spoke of Luther and his heresies.

“Luther has helped,” said Andrew, “to do a great deal for his country and to our own. For had it not been for Luther, the King, albeit he attacked him so fiercely, would not have proclaimed himself the head of the Church, nor divorced the Queen, nor rid us of the monks.”

“The King,” I said, “would burn Luther now if he were here”—and I recalled the Six Articles to his mind.

Andrew argued that it was always too late to

put back what you had taken away. It was like the felling of a tree. The King in his wisdom had cut down the tree of Papal supremacy. He thought the King's act a wise one. Others, maybe, might think it wrong. Right or wrong, the tree could not be replanted. It could only be resown, and then it would take hundreds of years to grow up again. The enforcing of the Six Articles now was as though you were to prop up a felled tree with its own branches.

I asked him whether we should all be Lutherans in time.

“Not Lutherans,” he said, “but reasonable Catholics, unhampered by such things as a Latin liturgy, the celibacy of priests, the superstitious veneration of Images, indulgences and other abuses.”

I reminded him it was death at present to question the validity of these customs.

Andrew assented ; but when the King (God save his Grace !) should be no more, he asked what would happen then ? If the Reformers

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in England, led by the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, a married man, carried out their designs, what authority should gainsay them ? Little Prince Edward ? We were now from henceforward severed from the authority that once bound Christendom, and the Reformers could do what they willed. Who was there to excommunicate them ? They were kept at bay, and in the shadow, by fear of the King's frown and vengeance ; but once that were no more ? Many of the highest in the land were even now Reformers at heart, only they durst not say so.

What he said chimed with what I had been thinking for some time. But I told him I looked upon such events as disastrous. I asked him whether he welcomed them.

Andrew answered in a whisper that he sometimes wondered whether one religion were not much the same as any other, and was not the best religion that which caused the least bloodshed ?

I asked him whether the Reformers would

be more merciful and shed less blood than their forerunners, when the power was in their hands.

He said he prayed that they might be more enlightened. But as human nature changed but little, it was to be doubted. In all countries and in all ages difference in religion had aroused the fiercest passions, and all quarrels were theological at the core. And that was why he was for fostering theology as little as might be.

“Then you no longer believe,” I said, “in Divine revelation.”

“I believe in Divine revelation,” he said, fervently, “but Truth is many-faced, and in the city of Truth there are many mansions ; and all roads lead . . .”

“To Rome ?” I said.

“Yes, to Rome ; but not to the Bishop of Rome.”

“Andrew, you are no longer a Catholic,” I said.

“I believe that God became man,” he said,



“ but not that he left a line of Vicars, Supreme by right divine on earth. Moreover, I believe God has revealed Himself and will reveal Himself to thousands and thousands every day.”

“ If what you believe spreads to the people,” I said, “ there will be an end of religion.”

Then, said he, there would be more time for the people to mind the business of the country, and to do their daily task, without being busy in molesting or murdering their neighbours. Religion was bad for the common people ; but if they needs must have a religion, that which he would have them adhere to was a simple one : Do as you would be done by. He would have that be their law, and their prophets.

I said if that were so, everyone would be his own guide, and there we would be once more at the door of the difficulty. They would dispute among themselves.

Andrew said he would have a Church for the common folk, but a Church without dogma

and without superstition.

I told him he was asking for the impossible : for a house to be built without floor, walls, or roof, and if we took away the people's religion, they would make one of their own which in the end would destroy us. And what, I asked him, of the soul and the life after death ?

He said we knew little of the soul, save what we had learnt from our nurses. He quoted the pagan :

*Nobis cum semel occidit lux
Nox est perpetua una durmienda.*

When our brief rushlight shall be extinguished, one long perpetual night awaits us, one and all. Nobody could disprove that. That was all we knew.

I argued there was the voice of conscience and the call of faith : and the word of the Gospel. The pagans had known nothing of these. No pagan ever spoke with authority ; no pagan ever said : “ Peace I leave with you,

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My peace I give unto you.” Where among the ancients was there one who spoke in accents such as those? Or who had dared to talk of His peace?

“ *He* spoke like that,” said Andrew, “ but His representatives on earth have never tired of speaking otherwise.”

Then it was we miserable mortals, I argued, and not His Church, but the human instruments of His Church who were to blame for not following His precept and example; but if we failed with that precept and example before us, what should we, what should mankind, what should we one and all of us, miserable sinners, do without them?

He said we should not be without them, but able to see them clearer, and not through a veil of falsehood.

“ Then is it true,” I said to him, “ that you have discarded the Faith you were brought up in? You have joined the Reformers? ”

He denied having discarded his Faith in His Lord, but alone in His servants. As to the

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Reformers, he had no love for them. He abominated their services, their manners, and their sermons. He knew their philosophy would not bear the test of probing by any one of our doctors, but he thought the multitude of men and that our country would be happier under their rule than under the yoke of the Pope of Rome.

I reminded him of his words that when the tree was once cut it could not be made to grow again.

He said we should be the better without that all-overshadowing tree.

I feared we would not be without a tree. We would be without the one tree ; but each would grow a tree of his own. There would no longer be one tree but a forest ; no longer one Pope but one thousand popes in each country ; a thousand tyrants, each claiming right divine. We had one already : the King. The Germanies had several : Luther, Calvin ; and soon the French would have their own. We could not yet see them, they were being sown.

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I feared, too, the Reformers, should they prevail in Europe, might well prove as fierce as any of their forerunners. It was Secular power that had ever and everywhere been ruthless, and he would make religion subservient to that power, and make religion itself secular.

“ Woe then unto religion ! ” I said to him. “ Woe unto us, if this should be ! You say that our country and our countrymen will be happier without the tree of the Church. But do you not see that the fall of this tree must be inseparable from the ruin of all that you hold most dear : the tradition, the banner, the way of life which we have reverenced all our days. Have you no reverence for the past ? And, if you have no reverence for it, will you sever yourself from it without sorrow ? ”

Andrew said it was a fairy tale, exceeding beautiful, but the beauty was not enough to compensate for the abuses that it begot. Let the dead bury their dead.

I told him he had lost the Faith.

He was silent.

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After a time he asked me whether I still cleaved to the old religion? To the ritual, to the Sacraments? Did I hold such things dear?

“Dearer than life,” I answered.

“But you think no less well of me?” he asked.

“God forbid,” I said, and I told him I felt sure that what he had lost he would one day find once more: Peace.

Mary came and begged Andrew Hynd to have a mug of ale before he left us. The sun was setting, and shining upon the spire of St. Paul’s and lighting up the roofs of London Bridge. Wherries darted like birds across the wide water. I looked at the river, and the trees beyond it, and the smoke of cottage chimneys, and I felt my heart warming. “O Queen of Heaven,” I said in my heart, “May this land of England and this city of London, thy dowry, which I love so dearly, never lose the Faith of her fathers, and never be without thy special protection.”

CHAPTER VI

My desire was to abandon work at the Bar, and to retire to the country, but this was not to be. It seemed possible, easy indeed, but I could not sever the thin strands, frail as a cobweb but strong as steel, of the duties and ties that bound me to London.

Mary too was opposed to this, and I would not act against her will.

Looking back now on the years that followed after our marriage, I ask myself who was to blame for the slow estrangement between us that began as a shadow and ended in being a wall.

We lived in London and at Southlands. My work at the Bar progressed, but men said I would never be such a one as my father, and this was true ; who knew it better than I ? for

my heart was not in my work. My heart was in the fields, and the woods, and the garden, and among books ; and the prizes and honours of the world were to me as dust and ashes, and moreover the struggle was distasteful ; I had no wish to beat others, to rival others, to succeed, to triumph. Mary knew this, and whether she was sore-hearted and sad about it, I know not, for she never made me a reproach.

During the first summer we spent at Southlands, Anthony and his wife dwelt in the neighbourhood. Mistress Restwold had given birth to two children. Anthony had grown even more boisterous. His affections were undisciplined and fickle, and apt to range widely, and to settle with suddenness and violence, and then with equal suddenness to roam afield once more.

He courted Mary as he courted every comely face he came across, but she never gave her heart to him, at least that is my belief. She was fond of praise and attention, and she thought him pleasing. His visits reconciled her

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to Southlands, for Mary, although she was at home in a cell, craved, when in the world, company and admiration.

She was prone to jealousy, but I was careful to give her no cause for it.

Mistress Restwold and myself met often, but only in public, and never did we exchange an intimate word, but we seemed to understand each other without words, and would sometimes fancy that Mary knew of this secret wordless intercourse and disliked it.

The course of our lives was quiet, and no conflict arose out of the circumstances in which, had I known it, there was so much that was inflammable, and so many perilous elements.

One winter Mary went to Court at Greenwich and Hampton Court and the King remarked her. She took part in festivities and in the chase. She had become a different Mary from the girl who had taken refuge from the world at Bruges.

It was one autumn when we were in London,

that an incident happened that troubled the calm waters of my life perhaps for ever. I was alone. Mary was at Southlands. I was studying late, when there was a rap at the door, and a priest entered, a man whom I had never seen : he was a friar.

He bade me follow him at once, and he led me to a house hard by, where in an upper room stretched on a bed, lay Ralph Wriothesley, whom I had not seen since Christmas festivities at Brooke Hall and Southlands, before my marriage. He had been wounded in a duel, and he was dying, and the priest told me he would not die in peace until he had seen me. His life was fast ebbing, and he spoke with difficulty. He told me a strange tale, that he had loved Mistress Restwold, that she had flouted him, and that he had divined that she loved me. He thought that I would love her, so being jealous he had sought Mary in her convent at Bruges, and had told her that I loved another, and that this had destroyed her peace of mind, and killed her vocation, and

now he said he repented him, for he felt that he had made havoc of our lives, mine and Mistress Restwold's and Mary's. I did my best to reassure him, he having already been shriven, houselled and annealed.

But although I reassured him, his words had dropped poison into my heart, for he had revealed to me that Mary had wed me out of jealousy and not for love, and had he not acted as he did I might have married Mistress Restwold.

He said, "Say you pardon me, although I know full well you cannot, so that I may die easy."

I told him there was no need of pardon, for Mary and I were happily married, and he smiled a strange smile, and those were the last words he spoke.

The next time I met with Mistress Restwold, and it was many months later in the summer time, was by chance.

I had ridden from Southlands, on an afternoon to Eton College, and I was riding along

the riverside, when I met with a cavalcade of lords and ladies riding back to Windsor Castle, and among them was Mistress Restwold. She lagged behind the others, and she and I rode along the banks together. It was in July and boys were in boats upon the river, and playing at ball in the meadows. Windsor Castle gleamed among the trees. The air was sultry and the sky covered with cloud. A few drops of rain would fall now and again on the grey water of the river and over the flat tower of the Castle, the end of a rainbow was near it, and its reflected phantom glimmered in the greyness.

And as I met Mistress Restwold a sword seemed to pierce my heart, and I felt as the Florentine poet recorded that he felt when he beheld Beatrice anew, and was aware that the ancient flame which had consumed him was not dead but raging fiercer than before.

We talked of trivial things, and as two boys passed us Mistress Restwold said that this place seemed to her the citadel of happiness.

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We talked of school life, my school days, and I told her that school days were verily the happiest of man's life, but that boys know it not at the time.

"If we knew the future," I said, "we could not endure it."

And she said that we grew happier as we grew older. She said we expected less, that at one time she had prayed for miracles to happen, she had craved infinite felicity or utter grief, but now she was well content with the golden mean.

I asked her whether she was happy. She said she was happy, that she loved her husband and her children, and she asked me about myself.

I told her I was as she, and then we rode on in silence, but the silence belied our words.

We had ridden across a broad meadow, and we heard the Chapel bell ringing for Vespers.

"Let us go to Vespers," she said, and to Vespers we went. We left our horses in charge of an hostler at an inn, and we walked into the chapel. The scholars in their white sur-

plices were already in their seats. The chapel was dim, but lighted with wax tapers. There were flowers about the image of Our Lady. The scholars chanted the Psalms, and shouted the Magnificat. When Vespers were over, the Provost and the Headmaster, the Vice-Provost and the fellows marched out, in orderly procession ; and at the door of the chapel Mistress Restwold bade me good-bye, and as we said farewell to one another I looked at her as I had never looked at her before, opening the casement of my soul, and she seemed affrighted and stricken, for she could read what had been behind that open casement.

A little later she and her husband visited us at Southlands, and Anthony said to Mary : “ Did you hear how Robert and Joan met by stealth in Eton Chapel ? They met by the river, and galloped away from us,” and he laughed at his wife and at myself, saying : “ That is the lad. Your Robert is a poacher ! ” and he laughed again loudly, and Mary laughed a little.

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Later in the evening she asked me whether the tale were true. I told her the truth, and how there was no mystery in the matter.

She said nothing further, but I think the spark of jealousy, which had never died within her, broke from that moment into flame once more. For ever after that she took pains that no such meeting should happen again, and it seemed to me from that moment, although she had determined I was not to give her cause for jealousy, she had no care not to give me cause for it, for she let various of the courtiers and gallants court her. But I remained indifferent. I had at that time so strong a belief in my wife's virtue and honesty, and I would never have believed the contrary without the evidence of my senses ; and Mary knew this, and maybe this knowledge galled and angered her. She would rather I had been jealous, jealous without cause. I would swear at that time there was no cause for it, and, although she lived amidst admiration and flattery, she had lost neither her heart nor her head, and

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she kept her admirers in check, so that after a time they soon grew weary of the siege. Yet there were still assailants who continued the siege, and perchance despaired not of victory.

It was that meeting at Eton College which sowed the seeds of mistrust in her mind, and was the first stroke of the pick that made a breach in our married life.

While the seeds of an estrangement between myself and Mary were growing, another and greater estrangement was to befall between myself and my father.

About four years after my marriage, my father was knighted as a reward for his services at the Treasury and the Mint. He was a Member of Parliament, a Justice of the Peace in two counties, a lawyer of renown, and stood high in the world of merchants. The King regarded him as one of his most loyal and faithful servants, a man orthodox in politics, staunch and loyal, and a reasonable and true Churchman. Bishop Gardiner thought well of him; the Archbishop not so

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well ; but at that time the influence of Gardiner was the greater. My father looked upon me as one who would carry on the tradition and precept upon which his life was based, in the same manner and in the same rut ; nor could he imagine, short of treason, any swerving from them, nor indeed any point of disagreement.

Whereas I knew that my path would one day no longer be his, but I had thought this perhaps to be fancy, and yet there had been moments when variation had almost come to the surface, but I never let any discord be sounded, nor any disagreement come to view.

It was Andrew Hynd who first revealed to me by his thoughts and views what might come to pass later, but in the meanwhile all such matters were interrupted by the war.

It was soon after one Eastertide Andrew Hynd was sent from Paris with despatches of moment. He was to return forthwith, bearing other despatches from England. During his stay in England he spent several hours in my

company, and it was his news, and his words that revealed to me much that was of moment for the future. He told me at once there would be war between England and France.

I argued that, if the friendship between the Kings had proved strong enough to survive the King's second marriage, and the French King's support of the Papacy, it would prove strong enough to survive aught else.

He said the tempers of the two monarchs had been frayed by an overlong friction. Each accused the other of ingratitude, and each wished to vindicate his right, and to punish the offender. The French King had told Andrew we were perfidious, but unaware of our perfidy. Our King thought King Francis to be ungrateful, and the Emperor had cemented the quarrel between France and England. Andrew revealed to me that the King had made a treaty with the Emperor summoning the French to abandon their alliance with the Turks, and to compensate the Christians for all they had suffered from that

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alliance, to pay our King the arrears of his pension, and the answer was to be given in forty days, failing which we would reclaim the possessions of the Plantagenets in France, and the Emperor would reclaim Burgundy. I was startled by the news. Andrew told me the treaty had been signed, and that the heralds would proceed to the French Court with these demands. The French King could not accept them. He might not even receive the heralds, and that would mean war. Preparations were being made for the siege of Boulogne, and the King would take the field himself.

Andrew said we should be in Paris in a month's time.

I questioned him about the religious quarrel. He said nothing would happen before the death of King Francis, but then France would join the Reformers, and all Europe would follow him.

I asked him whether he still held with the Reformers.

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He said he was coming daily to wonder more and more whether they were not in the right, although he had no more love for them than before.

“But whether they be right or wrong,” he said, “they will triumph.”

“They will cut down the forest,” I said, “and men will applaud their woodmanship, and one day there will not be one tree left upstanding, and they will complain of the desert.”

“They say,” he answered, “it is better to have a desert than a wood so dense in foliage that it hides the sky.”

I asked what their goal might be.

“Their goal,” he said, “is knowledge, enlightenment, a happier world.”

“That has always been our goal,” was my answer, “the City of God. We know there is no perfection here on earth, and that we are the children of parents who fell.

“And some say,” he made reply, “there was no Fall——”

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“Already?” I asked. “Is that what the Reformers teach?”

He knew not. He said he was not one of the Reformers. He cared not a fig for the Reformers. Lutherans or Calvinists, or whosoever they might be. Yet he was for search, inquiry, freedom of question, freedom from the shackles and trammels of all religions, for knowledge, for light. He knew that if he were heard speaking thus, and it came to the King’s ears, he should go to the stake; but there were many in France who were not Reformers, but who were of one mind with him. “Not, mark you,” he said, “that the Reformers disbelieve in God; not that they do not worship Our Blessed Lord, but it is the chains His Churches have forged they desire to sever.”

“But if they destroy His Church, how, where and when will His worship be taught?”

“They say the hour which was foretold in the Gospel is at hand, when God will be worshipped, not in this temple or in that

temple, not in Rome or Paris, but in spirit and in truth. That is the goal towards which they and we are striving."

And then we argued in a circle. I spoke of the Sacraments ; and he of the Spirit and the bar of ritual : how the Spirit quickens and the letter killeth ; and I reminded him that Our Lord himself had made the ritual, and that if they believed in Him why disobey Him ? He said there was no disobedience. The Reformers would go to His teaching and to His institution which had been choked by the prodigious ceremonies invented by man.

Bread and Wine were still Bread and Wine, I said. The Church had grown as the mustard seed He told of ; but the tree was the tree of that seed, and no other, and now they would cut it down.

He denied this. They would prune it of its dead wood and strengthen and restore it.

" The Reformers," I said, " will cut off the branches, and each Reformer will call his branch the tree."

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“ The tree, according to the Reformers, has grown rotten,” said Andrew. “ It must either be husbanded or die.”

I asked him if France led the Reform, whether all Europe would follow ?

He said it was certain.

“ And if some refuse to follow ? ” I asked.

“ The Reformers say they will abolish trial for heresy ; but the few shall not be allowed to thwart the will of the many.”

“ Then heresy, or disagreement, will become treason ! ” I cried. “ God forbid ! God forbid ! ”

And my soul was filled with consternation, as I said these words, for I believed that what Andrew prophesied would assuredly come to pass.

CHAPTER VII

THE war was fated to affect the course of my life albeit in a roundabout fashion.

Three of my brothers took part in it: George, my second brother, who was serving in the King's Navy, and had about him the sharp savour of the sea : Henry, who was a soldier in the King's Bodyguard, and Edward, who was still a boy, nineteen years of age, and about to begin the career of a soldier.

My father and mother thought him too young to go to the war, but he was so urgent in his entreaties, that they yielded to them, and gave him his heart's desire.

Henry was twenty-five years old. He had been a soldier since the age of twenty, after spending some years at schools, at none of which he had plied his book, and from all of

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which he had been taken away, as the school-masters could do nothing with him.

He had nothing in common either with my father or my mother, and my mother said sadly that he took after a great uncle of hers who had lived in riot and died in shame. Henry had so far lived riotously and had never ceased roystering in dice and vice, in wild and vulgar company. He welcomed the war not from a desire of winning honour but of escaping from the grip of present circumstances.

My brothers sailed in June. Anthony Restwold was to sail with them. George was at sea. In the morning of the day, Henry and Edward came to bid farewell to their parents. I sat with my mother in the garden at Denham.

My mother asked me whether I thought it had been right to allow Edward to go to the war.

“He laughs at me,” she said, “and says I am speeding him to the war like a Spartan mother.”

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“He is happy,” I said.

“Happy! Ah! all too happy, you know well he will not come back.”

I tried to comfort her, but she shook her head.

“I know it is so,” she said, “and you know, and I believe he knows, and your father knows it too.”

I asked my mother whether she harboured the same fears for Henry, for we all knew that Henry, despite his faults and follies, perhaps on account of them, was of all her children nearest to her heart, although she herself would have denied the preference.

“No,” she said, “what I am thinking may sound strange to you, and you may think me hard of heart, but, in a fashion, it would be only too good a thing for Henry to fall in battle. It would end all his troubles too soon and too easily.”

I was silent.

“His troubles are sore,” she said, sighing. “Had it not been for the war your father

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would have cast him out from hearth and home and abandoned him to his folly. Now he has consented to forgive him for all he has done and left undone."

Henry's life to me had been somewhat of a mystery ; all I knew of it was by hearsay, and men avoided speaking of him with me, but, despite of this, rumour reached me now and again. I knew not how much or how little my mother knew. At this moment she seemed to know more than I had even guessed.

"Is there much to forgive," I asked, "besides his dicing?"

"His dicing," she said gravely, "is the least harmful of his deeds. I fear he has little of respect for God or man."

"He may change ; he is still young."

She shook her head. She said he would go from bad to worse unless God saw fit to grant him a soldier's death.

"I cannot think this can be," she said, "for I know full well he deserves it not, although it is I, his mother, who say it, and

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God knows I love him," and she broke into tears.

When my father entered the hall for dinner that day he looked to me older by a score of years, and yet to the outward view he was serene and of good humour. In the afternoon Henry and Edward rode over from Windsor to say farewell.

They had but little time to spare ; on the morrow they were for London, Dover and Calais. Henry was dressed in the uniform of the King's Guard, and no one could gainsay that he cut a fine figure, in his scarlet guarded with yellow and his steel.

Edward wore the older uniform of the King, white from head to foot ; fair he looked and unspotted from the world, clean and with eyes of morning, and all too young : a white wafer of sacrifice, whereas Henry wore on his low, swarthy brow and his sad distrustful eyes the signature of a fallen angel. I was coming from the house to the garden. As I stood still within the portal, my wife stood on the terrace

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before me watching Edward and Henry. Hitherto Henry had heeded her but little ; he liked better the company of drabs, and was ill at ease with the ladies of the Court, but I saw that as she looked upon him he gave her a glance in return, swift and fierce, so that she looked away.

Henry approached her and said :

“ Will you give me a charm to guard me from the weapons of the enemy ? ”

“ Willingly,” she answered, smiling. “ Shall it be a rose or a Holy Medal ? ”

He laughed :

“ I would have a more potent and living charm,” he said. “ A kiss from your divinely-shaped lips.”

My wife told him he might take a sister’s kiss and blessing. But it was no brother’s kiss he gave. I advanced towards them just as she had broken away from him, and was saying, with a blush, “ Let us join the others.”

Soon the moment for departure came. The horses were brought to the door. Edward and

Henry knelt down to receive their father's and their mother's blessing. William Orchard, the groom, was to accompany them, and my mother gave Edward into his care. The servants were gathered together in the yard. The dogs barked and one of them whined. Edward leapt gaily on to his horse and drained the stirrup-cup that was offered him. Henry gazed at my wife as he drank. My mother looked at both of them, as she stood calm and dry-eyed, but paler than of wont, on the doorstep.

My father's eyes were filled with tears, and he faltered as he said :

“ God and Our Blessed Lady guard you both, and may St. George protect you.”

When Henry bade me farewell he said :

“ Take care of Mary lest someone filch her from you.”

And he made his horse turn and prance with easy horsemanship, as he saluted us, and waved his hand, and looked at my wife.

“ We shall be back by Christmas,” Edward

shouted, " and bring you gifts from Paris."

They shouted and waved, and trotted through the gates. My father turned his back and walked in silence back to the house. My mother went about the business of the household.

Sharp was my desire to be going to the war myself, but that was not to be, and, besides all other considerations, it would have been over much to ask of my parents that all their sons should go to this war.

For some weeks we heard no news. Then came word that the King and the Imperialists were within the French frontier ; that the Emperor had taken three fortresses. Out of jealousy, perhaps, the King, in spite of all advice, instead of marching upon Paris, as had been agreed among the Allies, laid siege to Boulogne and to Montreuil. Then news came that the Emperor was at Château-Thierry, outside the walls of Paris, and that he was parleying with the French King. Before this parley was ended we heard that Boulogne

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had surrendered. An order reached my father that in thanksgiving a devout procession was to be held in all towns and villages ; bells rang, houses were beflagged, and the maids of the village were garlanded with coronals of flowers. Shortly afterwards the Emperor made peace with King Francis. The King raised the siege of Montreuil and came home. There was more rejoicing and merrymaking, and bonfires. We awaited the return of Edward and Henry. They did not come ; but news came that Henry and Edward had fought in the siege, and that each of them had won honour. The war went on by sea (George was serving in Lord Lisle's fleet) and by land, until June of the following year, and it was in June, two years after Henry and Edward had set out, that news of an armistice came to Denham.

My father had been appointed Master of the Mint ; my work at the Bar, though not famous, was prosperous, and the fortunes of the family seemed to be waxing. It was one

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evening towards the end of June that Henry knocked at my door in London, and when I asked him for news of Edward, he blessed himself, but said nothing for a time.

Then he told me how Edward had fallen in a skirmish outside Calais two days before the armistice. We walked round to my father's house to prepare him for the news. My father was at the Treasury, and we awaited him. During these moments Henry told me the story of Edward's death, in a more detailed fashion, and the second version of the story seemed not to be in harmony with the first.

Presently my father arrived. I received him without Henry, took him upstairs, and told him the news. I then left him, and returned with Henry, who told him the story more or less as he had told it to me. The story was briefly this :

They had made a reconnaissance in the direction of Montreuil. Walter Brylling was nominally in command, but Henry was their

guide, as he knew the country ; and with them were Edward, and six troopers. They were to meet a stronger escort in some village that had been settled upon. They arrived at this village, found no escort, and pushed on without it. They halted near the edge of a wood for rest and food. After resting for an hour, William Orchard brought the news that he had seen a Frenchman's helmet in the woods opposite. The order was given to mount—and hardly was it out of his mouth when they heard a volley, and there was the cry of the French, who had crept up within range unobserved.

Brylling had mounted his horse and galloped off, shouting to the rest to follow him, as it was clear that they were outnumbered. Edward, who had hardly had time to mount, and Henry, followed him ; but as they did so, Henry saw Brylling fall, and a moment later, Edward was hit, and fell, mortally wounded.

Henry escaped by a miracle. The French

pursued the rest of the detachment, but, while they were pursuing them Sir John Waters and his men (who were the strong escort they should have met) appeared from the opposite direction in great force, and put the Frenchmen to flight. They found the bodies of Edward and Captain Brylling, and they buried them at Calais.

We rode down to Denham on the same day, to tell the news to my mother. She seemed already to have divined what had befallen. And even if this were not so, she read the news in my father's face ; and when she had heard it, all she said to me was : “ It might have been both of them. God has spared us that.”

Mary was at Southlands, and not knowing what had happened ; and she walked round, to see my mother, as she was wont to do, soon after our arrival. I met her at the doorstep with the sad news. She turned pale, and seemed about to swoon.

“ Not Henry ! ” she said.

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“No, not Henry,” I said. “Edward.”

As I said this, I felt as if the past had been lit up for me by a sudden flash of lightning. I felt assured that Mary in that moment would gladly have given her husband, her father, her mother, her life, all she held dear, everything in the world, rather than that it should have been Henry who had fallen. I knew now that Mary had never loved me; and more than this: she loved Henry.

She mastered herself immediately. Her eyes were filled with tears, decorous tears of sympathy and condolence, and she wiped them away with her kerchief.

“Poor Edward!” she said. And the accent of her voice was now changed. “Poor, poor Edward—so young, so happy.”

But in spite of all she said now, nothing she could say or do would ever wipe out that first sudden light of terror, followed by the immense, the unexpressive relief, that I had read in her face and in her accents. She then asked after my father and my mother.

CHAPTER VIII

My father sat late into the night writing a letter. It was dispatched the next morning to Sir John Waters, who lived not far off.

My mother waylaid the messenger who was to bear this letter and sent one from herself as well. The next morning Sir John waited upon us, but my mother received him at the front door and had speech with him for a time in the garden before he went in. He remained for nearly an hour with my father, who seemed well pleased with what Sir John had told him.

My father and Henry stayed but a day longer at Denham. They both had business in London. They left me behind to keep my mother company, but I too could not stay more than a few days longer.

The morning after my father left for London, William Orchard, whom we had all thought to be dead, came back to London.

He was a native of the country and had served us all his life.

I was overjoyed to see him once more. I had not thought to see him alive again.

He began without delay telling me again the narrative of events that I had heard from Henry, at greater length and with a more abundant wealth of detail.

The cardinal points of the two narrations were in harmony, but there was this difference.

According to Orchard's tale, as soon as Orchard had told Captain Brylling of what he had seen—a helmet glinting in the trees—orders to mount were given. Bolts and bullets rained upon them as the order was given. Henry mounted and the Captain shouted to the rest to follow them.

“Master Henry,” he said, “obeyed the order as a soldier should, at the instant, and so did the troopers, and they galloped off.”

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I asked about Edward, and he answered that Edward's foot was in his stirrup when his horse ran away, and Edward ran after him, overtook him, and caught hold of the saddle, but the leather pummel broke in his hand, and the horse galloped away. The Captain and Edward drew their swords and stood at bay, with no one beside them but Orchard.

“We three will fight the French army,” Edward had shouted.

I asked him why the Captain had dismounted, and he said his horse was shot under him. I asked what had befallen Henry in that while. The answer was so wordy you could not see the wood for the trees.

From his story I understood this much clearly: Orchard had levelled his musket to fire upon a Frenchman, when he was hit by a bullet and he fell forward on the neck of his horse and lost his senses. When he recovered them he was still on horseback, in the wood, and his horse was grazing. He rode back to the place where the fighting

had been, and found no trace of Edward, but the bodies of two Frenchmen and some dead horses. He rode back to Calais and there fell faint of his wound, was taken sick of a fever, and when he recovered his health he learnt that peace had been made.

Edward had been attacked before he had had time to mount, and Captain Brylling had remained with him and had been killed, and Henry had ridden away and left Edward undefended save by Brylling and Orchard.

I was fearful of what my mother, with her swift mind, would think when she heard his story, and I told him when he saw her not to dwell too much on what had happened, for it would sadden her.

“ You must say,” I said, “ that while you were defending Edward you were wounded and stunned, and that you remember no more.”

Orchard said that was but the truth, that Edward had died fighting like a prince, with all his wounds in front, and that Henry would

have fought as well had God so willed, but fortune was against him.

I took him to my mother and he told his tale anew, with a still greater wealth of detail and even less order. When he had done, my mother put one question to him :

“ When the French charged, were neither Henry nor Edward mounted ? ”

He said that the order had been given, that Henry had obeyed, that he had galloped off.

Here my mother interrupted him and, piercing him with her eyes, said :

“ But Edward ? ”

He told of the horse running away, and my mother asked what Henry, having witnessed this, had done. Henry, he answered, was no longer there ; he had obeyed the order and galloped off.

“ But the Captain,” my mother said, “ had not galloped off.”

Orchard said that his horse had been killed and he was obliged to fight on foot.

“But,” she urged, “was not Captain Brylling’s horse shot later?”

“Maybe it was later, maybe it was before,” he said, and he began the story anew from the beginning.

When Orchard had taken leave of us, my mother asked me what I thought of his tale. I said I thought he was telling the truth, but that he wrapped it up in a maze of words.

“Despite that,” my mother said, “one thing will not have escaped you.”

I asked what thing. My mother said that Orchard’s story was not the same as Henry’s. I said that few men had been known to tell the same story in the same way. She paid no heed to my words, but she said in Henry’s story Edward had galloped away *with* Brylling as soon as Brylling gave him the order: that Brylling and Edward had been killed as they rode off; killed on horseback—that is what she understood; that Henry had said no word about Edward’s horse running away, nor about

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Orchard staying behind, nor about any fighting on foot.

“Perhaps,” I said, “he never saw it.”

“But why,” she asked, “did he not see it? He could not have been far off, and if he did not look back . . .”

I had no words to say.

“Do you think,” she asked with passion, “his father would ever forgive him for *not* having looked back?”

I was silent.

“You know better than I,” she said, “that Orchard is trying to shield him, but his devices are as transparent as those of a child, and you know how swiftly your father would see through them.”

I agreed, but what was to be done? My father was bound to see Orchard. My mother settled on this course: Orchard was to be told that my father would never forgive Henry for not saving Edward’s life, although he knew, and we knew that was not possible; and that he must say he was stunned, and that

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when he recovered, after being stunned, all he remembered was the sudden attack.

“But Henry,” I said, “could not have saved Edward’s life.”

“No, but he could have died with him,” my mother said, “and what is worse is that he should have concealed a part of the truth and twisted the remainder.”

“But we will never tell, Robert,” she said, and she smiled through her tears.

“No,” I said, “we will never tell.”

“I do not blame him,” my mother said, “but his father would never forgive him, and even that is not what I am thinking of, but rather of this, of what he may do in the future, and how will it end.”

At the end of the term in July my father was expected back at Denham. He was to bring Henry with him, who was to join the King’s household at Windsor.

Orchard was told what to say, but he heeded us not, and he maintained stoutly that Henry had done his duty and fought like a prince,

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as his brother had done.

As soon as my father arrived with Henry, my mother told him, in the presence of Henry, of Orchard's arrival. Henry heard the news with calm. Orchard was sent for and told my father a tale that was void of content and full of irrelevance ; so much so that anxious as my father was to hear anything new, and shrewd as his questions were, he was overwhelmed by Orchard's garrulity and forced at last to stem it.

I remember the scene in the hall. My mother sitting on one side of the great fireplace, and my wife on the other side. I stood behind my mother's chair, and Henry behind that of my father, in a recess. He stood handsome and insolent, his beard well trimmed, and his delicate hands showing to advantage in his lace ruffles.

He looked my wife full in the face while Orchard, standing up before the fireplace, told his tale, addressing my father, but looking at all of us in turn. And Henry so far from

seeming fearful at hearing Orchard's tale, which, while it did not gainsay his own story, passed over or left out such points as might have cast any blame on him, seemed to take pleasure in that telling.

I wondered how far Orchard's words were due to accident or design, how far he knew what he was doing, and whether, in his heart, he thought Henry was blameless, or whether his loyalty to us all was so great that it made him blind to any weak spot in the armour of any one of us.

My father asked a few questions, but they were smothered by Orchard's flow of words. My father called a halt and Henry took the stage, and by a few deft questions and timely comments made it appear as if he and Orchard had been the heroes of stirring deeds.

Orchard took up the cue with alacrity, and those who had no means of judging, but by the surface, would have sworn not only that Orchard worshipped Henry, which was true, but that he had been an eye-witness of heroic deeds.

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At one moment Henry said to Orchard :

“ It’s a sad thing that Master Robert was not there with us.”

Orchard said that I was a fine rider and a rare scholar, and Henry said, with a laugh :

“ We cannot all of us be scholars. I was ever the dunce of the family, but I wish you had been with us, Robert ; things might have been different. Your prudence might have checked the rashness of John Brylling. We were a gang of hot-heads.”

My father dismissed Orchard, and, as he did so, he looked at Henry and my wife noticed it. She looked at me and then at Henry, and compared us, unfavourably, I think.

“ The family has been well represented,” she said. “ George has fought at sea and is safe at Portsmouth, Edward died for his country, and Henry has covered himself with glory.”

“ Yes,” I answered, “ we have reason to be proud.”

After Orchard’s return and his interview with my father, Henry was enveloped in a

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cloud of incense. Orchard's loyalty to the family, and all his devotion to Edward, settled on him, and he derived immense benefit from it, and made the most of it.

My father, whose mind was cautious, and who at times had been outraged by Henry's behaviour and frightened at thoughts of what he might do in the future, had not, I felt sure, been at rest, when he had heard Henry's first account of the skirmish, nor had he been certain that there was not something lurking behind. He had no reason for suspicion, save certain bitter experiences in Henry's deviations from the truth in the past. Orchard's story had, I hoped, restored his peace of mind. Orchard's honesty was sure, and his worship of Henry was patent. If Henry had failed to behave well in any way, my father would reason, or if he had been remiss with regard to Edward, it was impossible that Orchard, whose devotion to Edward was known to everybody, could have forgiven Henry. So I thought at that time, his mind was at rest, or almost at

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rest, but, as I came to know later, I was far from the truth.

Henceforth my wife looked upon Henry as a hero. He had the glamour of war about him, and I had the contrary of glamour, the disadvantage of not having been to the war. Perhaps she knew this to be unfair. She knew that I would have gone to the war gladly, but it was Henry who had been there, I who had stayed at home. I believe that in her heart, she from that moment began to despise me, or rather she had already begun to love Henry, and scorn of myself was the fatal fruit of that love, the seeds of which had been sown before the war.

CHAPTER IX

IT was during one summer when my brother Henry and Anthony Restwold, both of them at that time officers in the King's Guard, were either at Hampton Court or at Windsor that Henry resumed the siege of Mary's heart. This siege was carried on with caution and circumspection, for Henry had determined that, come what might, he would not be fooled.

And it was during this summertime that I came to know that the feelings which I had once harboured for Mistress Restwold were unchanged, nay changed for the greater instead of for the less. I had thought my marriage would put an end to such things, but it befell otherwise, as I will tell.

It was on a day in the middle of August, we rode up the river in a barge—Henry,



Anthony Restwold, his wife, and other lords and ladies of the Court. We were a goodly and gay gathering, talking and jesting.

We landed on a small island for our feast, while the rowers sang and the lutists played upon their instruments. We were to be rowed back by moonlight. The sky was serene and the air was without a breath, save upon the water and under the shade of the trees on the island. On the island there was an arbour built, which the King had made at the time he was courting Anne Boleyn. It was now deserted. After we had eaten, the company broke up into groups and wandered about the island. When they had assembled once more, someone noticed that Mary was absent and called to her. And presently she came with Henry from the direction of the arbour.

The sun had set and it was quiet. Some swans glided by, and there was not a breath of wind to ruffle the water. Presently the silence was broken by the sound of a lute ; a boat passed by ; in it were some gallants.

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They were merry and noisy, and some of the men were in wine, when one of them, who was young—I never saw his face again—touched the lute and sang a song. The accent of his voice comes back to me now. I never had heard the like of it before, and never since, save here, in the city in which I am writing. It was a high, hoarse voice, veiled with sunshine and a rich sadness.

Snatches of the song reached us, and I remember some of the words till this day, as well as the melody to which they were sung :

“ All bathed in dew
The roses’ hue
Is not so fresh to see.
And ermine white
Is far less bright . . .”

I was beside Mistress Restwold, and we were both silent. We had been talking up to that moment of one thing and another, but the sudden silence and the notes of that song, which sounded doubly tuneful on the waters,

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transported our minds to another sphere in which our souls met in closer contact. Our talk was without words, and therefore the more poignant. In the silence, messages passed from her to me and from me to her, which we durst not have put into words. As for myself, I lost the knowledge of my whereabouts. It was to me as if Joan and I were alone on that island, and as if the island had never been inhabited before. As though we were the first man and the first woman in the world ; as if we had been here from the beginning of time, and had time without end before us.

“ For she is fair
Without compare,
And fresh as blossoms are.
Her shining eyes
Light up the skies
As doth the morning star.”

So sang the young voice, and other deeper and hoarser voices repeated the last line,

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as the boat sped by. The company in it shouted and waved to us. The music became fainter :

“ For she hath fed
On heavenly bread,
From Hebe’s private store.”

Those were the last words I heard, shouted by the singers as they passed into the beyond. The music ceased, and someone said it was growing cold. It was then that I awoke to the world and to the life around me. And at once I knew that something momentous had happened. I knew from that moment not only that I loved Joan, not only as I had loved her before, but more than I had ever known.

I would not have owned to this at the time, but I was as one astray in the world of men, as one who has come from outer darkness and entered a room full of lights.

We made ready to go home, and we were rowed to where our horses awaited us.

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I bade good-night to Joan, and, as I did so, once more I felt the ties of a new and invisible bond. I knew that nothing could be again as it had been before. I rode home with Mary and Henry. It was not until we had reached home, and that Henry had taken leave of us, and that we were alone in our room, that Mary said to me :

“ How dared you make love to Joan in public, and before my eyes, so that all the world might be privy to your love-making ? ”

I told her she must be demented, but inwardly I was afraid, as if she had been spying on the secrets of my soul. I vowed I had spoken no word alone to Mistress Restwold. I called to her memory her own absence from the group. She at once said :

“ You accuse me of loving Henry ? ”

I accused her of nothing, and vowed I had exchanged no word with Joan that everyone present had not heard.

“ It is not what you said,” she said, “ that is of moment, but the manner in which you

said it ; your looks. It could have escaped nobody's notice."

Mary then protested that she had always known I loved Joan, and that had she not come back from Flanders I would have married her. The marriage with Anthony had been an afterthought. I asked her what I could do to make her believe that what she thought was untrue, and she said I could do but one thing, and that was never to set eyes on Joan again. I protested that I seldom saw her, but that it was impossible to avoid meeting so near a neighbour. But I was ready to promise never to see Joan or Anthony save when I was obliged to.

She said there could be no such obligation.

I spoke of the occasions brought about by chance—the meetings at Court, the biddings of my mother. This roused her anger, and she said I meant to say that I would promise nothing and that I loved Joan, had always loved Joan, and would always love Joan.

" It is useless," she cried, and she broke into

tears. “I always knew it would happen, I always knew it *must* happen.”

I strove to soothe her, but she only wept the more bitterly, and she wept till far into the night, and the storm of reproach broke out again afresh. I made her solemn promises, but she returned to the past and recalled a thousand small trifles. It was in vain that I protested. The storm lasted till daybreak, when at last Mary cried herself to sleep.

I determined to be true to my word ; although I knew that I could not put a certain thought away from me, I resolved never to exchange a private word with Mistress Restwold, nor to see her unless it were inevitable. This would make matters the easier, I thought, but I resolved that by hook or by crook, I must let Mistress Restwold know. One word would be enough, but how was I to speak that word ? How was I to convey to her even a silent message without offending my wife and breaking my promise ?

For the moment there was nothing to be

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done. So I thought, but I had counted without the hand of Providence.

It was but a few weeks later that my mother was anxious to see Henry, as he had once more done something to vex my father, or which would sorely vex him as soon as he came to hear of it, and my mother asked me to ride to Windsor and to beg Henry to come and see her without delay before my father, who was in London, should return. I rode to Windsor and found Henry, and delivered my message. As I was returning, I met with Anthony Restwold, his wife and some others. Fate so willed it that I was thrown into Mistress Restwold's company, and might exchange a few words with her unheard by the others, and I told her that for sundry and manifold reasons which she would understand, we must agree never to meet save when it was inevitable. Mistress Restwold nodded her consent in sorrowful silence, and said that she had known it would and must be so, that she had feared this all too well, but that she understood

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well, and would obey. I thought at the time that this brief interchange of words must have passed unnoticed, it befell so inevitably and it was so brief.

But it had not passed unheeded by Henry, who, as we rode home together, looked at me once or twice with mocking eyes, and once it seemed to me that he spoke in a manner which meant he could say more if he liked. But he never spoke Joan's name, and during all that ride back never had I known him more friendly ; there was an ominous somewhat in the honey of his words and his protestation. He made me his confidant ; he told me of his trials and his ill-fortune, and asked my advice as to what he should say to my father, and what he should do. He was once more in debt and he was in the clutches of an usurer. He was greatly afraid of my father's displeasure and he begged me to plead his cause with his mother. When we arrived home Mary asked me news of whom I had seen in Windsor, and I did not keep from her that I had met

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Anthony Restwold and his wife and others. And as I spoke Joan's name I saw that Henry looked at Mary meaningly.

That night I was afraid of another storm, but Mary said no word to me, and spoke only of Henry, and as to how best he could be helped in his trouble. The next morning my father came, and there were angry words between him and Henry, but my mother had persuaded Henry to confess all, and she contrived to soothe my father. Henry parted from him once more forgiven, and the promise that his debts would be paid for this, the last, time, but never more.

But ever after that day there was a change in Mary. She no longer upbraided me nor questioned me, nor wished to know whom I had seen when I was not with her, and so life went on, and we moved to London in the autumn, and the surface of our lives seemed once more to be serene.

CHAPTER X

IT was in the autumn that the King sent for my father to come to St. James'. My father would often be summoned by his Grace, but this time, he was bidden to bring me with him.

The King had lately grown so large that he was wheeled about in a chair unable to walk, and he was too greatly fatigued to sign letters himself. But his mind waxed in vigilance as his body in torpor. Nothing escaped his notice, and the pain from which he suffered made him more suspicious than of yore and perhaps more easy to deceive.

There were three men in whom the King put trust. Cranmer, who never opposed him, Gardiner, who never acted without the Royal sanction however plainly he spoke his mind to

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his Sovereign about any act after it had been committed, and my father.

My father was little known to the people, and few had heard of him, but the King rarely acted without first consulting him.

I had seen the King more than once at Greenwich and Hampton Court, and he had spoken to me, but I had never attended my father at a private audience. We were received at Whitehall on the morning of an autumn day. Mist hung about the river as we were rowed thither from Blackfriars.

We were ushered by pages through long corridors into a small room where the King sat next to a high table ; he a mountain of flesh propped up against cushions : and dressed in a nightgown of russet velvet, furred with sables. His face was yellow, flabby and seamed, and his grey eyes shot out sharp darts of light.

The King stretched out a small hand with a short straight thumb and then was seized by a fit of coughing. We were afraid and we thought the end had come, but as the King

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coughed he shook a silver bell and Dr. Butt arrived incontinent and gave him a draught which he kept ever in readiness. As soon as his Grace had recovered from his coughing fit, he gave his hand to my father and then to myself to kiss as we knelt beside him. My father was wearing a black cloak and his Grace motioned to him to unfasten it.

My father obeyed and the King said : “ I thought so ; the tailors always make those ruffs too high.” Then he coughed a little and began to talk about affairs.

When they had debated several matters concerning the abasement of the coin of the realm and other affairs, my father said :

“ Then that, your Grace, is finished.”

The King looked at my father and said with a smile :

“ And so am I.”

My father looked at his Grace and made no gesture of denial but lowered his eyes.

“ You are too honest to gainsay me,” said the King, “ the only one of them who is honest

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enough not to do that. When I die I want you to be rewarded—to be made a Baron. And that is why I have summoned you, and your son Robert. I wish him to hear what I have to say to you, that he may carry on your duty after you, when you are gone whither we must all go at the end."

My father bowed and said :

" Your Grace has rewarded me already beyond my deserts."

" You are to be one of my executors," the King said, addressing my father, " but they will undo everything I have done, and they will turn the Kingdom into a province of heathendom. But you, Edmund, will see that Masses are said for my soul daily ; I have left money for the purpose, and you will see that it is properly expended, and that I am not robbed of the means of Grace."

My father bowed again.

" And I have endowed the College of Trinity, Cambridge ; they shall have a Master and sixty fellows, besides scholars : and London

shall have the Church of the Greyfriars, and the hospital of St. Bartholomew. But the clergy are the sore in this realm worse than this ulcer that is tormenting me. There is no putting an end to their strife. They are so busy quarrelling, some so stiff with the old, and others so busy with the new that they have no longer time to preach the word of God, and the laity are at fault as well because they censure the proceeding of their Bishops and their Priests, instead of reporting the perverse doctrine to us, to whom authority has been committed by God, to reform and order such matters. They think because they have been allowed to read the Word of God in their mother tongue that they are free to expound the scripture and make it a taunt against preachers, and now it is rhymed, sung and jingled in every alehouse contrary to doctrine and its true meaning."

The King was rehearsing the last speech which he had made to the Parliament.

" And when I die, all will go from bad to worse, for who will exercise true authority ? "

“The Earl of Hertford, maybe,” said my father.

“God’s body!” said the King, “I trust him as much as I would a viper. They are all the same, all false.”

And here he was seized by another fit of coughing.

When he recovered, he said :

“I am ill, I can talk no more, but before you leave me swear to me, both of you—you, Edmund, my faithful servant, and you, Robert, whom I trust shall be his faithful son. . .”

We both knelt down and lifted up each his right hand.

“To be true to the children of my blood, to my son Edward and his offspring, and, should he die childless, to my daughter Mary, and my daughter Elizabeth ; should they succeed and should they have no issue to the descendants of my sister.”

We both took the oath.

“And never to support,” his Grace continued, “any rebel or supplanter, who shall try

and cause my children to lose their inheritance, for, mind you well, there shall not be wanting such supplacers."

His eyes flashed, and he raised his voice, saying :

" Rebels, traitors, one and all of them," and he was seized with a fit of coughing once more and he motioned us away and rang his bell for Dr. Butt, and as he withdrew the fit passed, and his Grace raised his hand in token of farewell, but said not another word.

This was the last time we ever saw the King. A few weeks later he was dead.

The King's death at first was kept secret, and later the Royal Testament was read to the two Houses of Parliament, and by it the King ordained that a Privy Council of sixteen of his executors should exercise the authority of the Crown until his son should complete his eighteenth year ; a second Council was to aid them, and to this Council my father was appointed, but he soon perceived that this second council was but a pretence and invested

with no authority. They could only tender advice if it were asked for, and the Council became a tool in the hands of the Earl of Hertford.

We attended the young King's coronation, and nothing troubled our lives until, in the following year, the Archbishop sent to the Bishops the Order of the King's Council for the suppression of Candles on Candlemass, ashes on Ash Wednesday, and Palms on Palm Sunday.

I asked my father if he would obey the Order, and he said it concerned the Priests, and not us, but the Priests must obey the King's will. The news reached us when Master Heathcote was lying grievously sick and near to death, and he was told of it by one of the servants, and he said to me that he was glad to die before seeing the desecration of such goodly days, and the Priest came at night to administer to him the last Sacraments and he was houselled and annealed, and after he was buried, and I asked my father who should replace him, my father said that henceforward there would be

no private chaplains, as it was against the King's will. Henceforward the Reformers acted ever more boldly, and an order came for the destruction of all images of Saints in Cathedrals and in the Parish Churches, at which the people murmured greatly, and at Whitsuntide of the following year the new book of Common Prayer was used instead of the Missal, so that we were now without Mass in the village.

I asked my father whether we were to continue to live in such wise and he bade me have patience. These orders were but the temporary whims, he said, of those who surrounded the new King ; we had but to lie low and wait, and all would be as it had been before, but in the meantime we were bound by oath to serve the King, and to obey his orders.

I protested the King was too young to reason of such things, and I disliked his Councillors who were stiff-necked and self-seeking, and heretics either by persuasion or for advantage.

And my father said that such things had often been before and would often be again, that many an English King had been at variance with the See of Rome, and that many changes had been proposed before and some carried out, but in the end Order would triumph and all would be as before.

As to the decree that the new Prayer Book should be used in the Parish Church, it was of no account for us, as we could hear Mass in London, and at the house of my wife's mother, where there was a chaplain, when I was at Southlands and my father at Denham. But I had come to live altogether in London now, for I had to be there owing to my work at the Bar, and Mary had no liking any longer for London, and remained at Southlands or at Bray with her mother, and I know now that this was so that she might be near to Henry who was at Windsor. And in the August of that year news came that in the West the men of Devon and Cornwall had risen against the new practices, and that Sir Peter Carew and Lord

Russell had been sent from Court to put the rising down. But what was at first a riot changed swiftly into a rebellion, and the example of the insurgents was followed in Yorkshire, Northamptonshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Oxford, and in our own county.

In the West the Commons of Devon and Cornwall drew up fifteen articles demanding the restoration of the Faith, but in the East many declined towards the tenets of the Anabaptists and other heretics, and everywhere there was trouble ; a messenger came to my father in secret bearing letters from Sir Thomas Pomeroy who had under him in North Devon a force of twenty thousand men with cannon, under the banner of the Cross, and he pleaded with my father to head a rising in Buckinghamshire and to march to London.

It was said that the Princess Mary had sanctioned the rebellion and that her chaplains were among the insurgents at Exeter, but my father said we had no evidence of this, and that, for the moment, King Edward was King,

and that he owed him his allegiance, and the young messenger, whose name was Coffin, the son of one of the leaders, argued that the King was but King in name and that the Protector was King in all but name, but my father would have nothing to say to him. He had sworn to obey King Edward and he would keep his oath ; religious quarrels there had always been and there would always be, and the religion of the State must be guarded and defended, or else the whole country would be the prey of rebels.

“ But,” said Coffin, “ we would restore the religion of our forefathers that is being taken from us.”

“ That,” said my father, “ is the King’s business. If the Lady Mary were Queen I would obey her, but the Lady Mary is not Queen, and so I shall obey King Edward whom I have sworn to serve.”

And I said to my father that I feared we should be bereft of our religion for ever, and he said if that came about it would be the fault of

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the rebels ; and he sent Coffin back to his father in the West.

And in the East and the South the rebels dispersed, for want of a leader, but in the West they made stubborn resistance, and were subdued only in the end by the aid of Lanzknechts and Italian musketeers and cannon, and gibbets were planted throughout Devon and Cornwall, and Coffin the younger with his father were cut to pieces at Kingsweston, and Arundel, and three others were hanged at Tyburn.

And I obeyed my father and inclined myself to his reasoning, although in my heart I feared that what Coffin had said was true.

And it was this same year that the King with the advice of his Privy Council, and in Conference with merchants, that is to say with my father's advice, determined the abasing of copper monies and the reduction of them into bullion, to the intent to deliver good monies for them.

CHAPTER XI

IN the year following my father came home laden with wondrous news. The Archbishop had eaten flesh, albeit it was Lent, for he and others and their households had been licensed so to do by the King, and it now became difficult to hear Mass, for the altars were overthrown. Princess Mary herself was not allowed to hear Mass in her own house, and Sir Anthony Browne had been sent to the Fleet prison for hearing Mass. And in all this my father acquiesced in silence, although he had no love for the Reformers, but he said ever that it would pass ; and when the Protector was executed and the King died, I began to think that perhaps he had been right.

And when on the death of the King, Lady Jane Grey was proclaimed Queen of England,

and Lady Mary and Lady Elizabeth were set forth as illegitimate, and when not ten days later the Lady Mary was proclaimed Queen at Norwich and defied Northumberland, my father broke his silence and put aside his neutrality, and said that it was our duty to serve and defend our lawful Queen; that Northumberland was a traitor, and that Lady Jane Grey had no claim to the throne. My father proclaimed Lady Mary Queen in Buckinghamshire, and raised men in the county, and a host of ten thousand men were assembled at Drayton, from our county and other counties, and marched to London. I was there with my father. I heard Lady Mary proclaimed Queen on Tower Hill; and my father, with the Peers and the Commoners, attended the Solemn Mass of the Holy Ghost before the opening of her first Parliament.

And when the Queen was safely seated on the throne, she was once again threatened by the rebels in Kent. My father once more, faithful to his oath, took arms, and he and Henry

marched against Sir Thomas Wyatt, but I took no part in this happening. And I became that year a Member of Parliament, and the following year I was knighted by the Queen and made a Privy Councillor, and in the same year the Lords and the Commoners carried a motion for the Reunion of the Church of England with that of Rome, without one dissentient in the Lords, and with only two among three hundred members in the Commons. And the Queen, with the advice of my father, proclaimed new coins of gold and silver, a sovereign of thirty shillings, the half sovereign of fifteen, and made other fair changes.

We lived now for the greater part in London, and heard Mass daily, and my father said that all had befallen as he had foretold, and that the ancient order had been restored, and when I told him that I feared for the future, he said my fears were baseless. I feared the headstrong nature of the nobles who it was said were likely to shake the throne once more and to foster discontent, owing to their obstinacy and

their misplaced zeal, which outran that of all the prelates, for while the nobles kept themselves immune by conforming to the religion of the land, whatever their opinions might be (and some were of the new way of thinking), those of the common people who were Hot Gospellers and Reformers, suffered at the stake, and many others, for heresy ; and the fate of Cranmer and Latimer inflamed the dissidents and sowed the seeds of sedition. And when I said this to my father and spoke of the evil effect of these burnings, he said as he had always said before, that the religion of the country must be maintained.

“ But,” I said, “ our holy religion is above and beyond the State.”

“ Yes,” he said, “ and it is being so maintained.”

He would not heed my meaning, nor regard my fears, so I said no more.

The French thought the moment a favourable one to take advantage of smouldering discontent and to hatch a plot which should

dethrone the Queen and put the Lady Elizabeth on the throne, and they caused, by their agents, the rumour to be spread abroad that the Queen, despairing of issue to succeed her had resolved to settle the Crown on her husband. My father said there was no truth in this rumour ; had it been true, not a man would have supported her, least of all himself.

But a plot was hatched and its conduct was entrusted to Sir Henry Dudley, a partisan of the attainted Duke of Northumberland, a friend of the Chief of the Gospellers, and the malcontents in the Southern Counties. Dudley sailed in disguise to the coast of Normandy to arrange the machinery of the plot and to receive supplies. But the moment was inauspicious, as the King of France had just then, against the advice of his minister, made a truce of five years with King Philip of Spain. Dudley and his fellows were bidden to conceal themselves, and those in England who wished to rebel were told to stay their hand and await a more favourable season. But before I

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relate the issue of the plot, which turned out to affect the lives of all of us, I must go back and take up the thread of family events that had happened before. And among such I must dwell on certain trifles which small in themselves, were destined to bring about momentous results.

During the last five years, my wife and myself had lived estranged. On the surface all appeared to be well, and she made me no reproach, and spared me all taunt, but I knew that she was aloof from me, albeit I had no evidence that her heart was fixed elsewhere.

Henry was now a guardsman in the household of the Lady Elizabeth, he was a member of Parliament, and I saw him but seldom, but he had mellowed and had become sedate, and put away the follies of youth, and we heard nothing of any riot or scandal. He had accompanied my father against Sir Thomas Wyatt, and my father was content with him.

Restwold was in the same household, and his

wife, though sometimes in London, was more often in the country with her father. Mistress Restwold and I had exchanged few words, save the civilities, for many years, and the uneasiness that Mistress Restwold had once caused Mary seemed to have been allayed for ever, but this in no wise lessened the estrangement that was between us.

Then the finger of Providence moved. Anthony Restwold and his wife were staying at her father's house during the summer vacation. Anthony had come from Hatfield to make a stay of a few days, and during that time he rode over to Denham to pay his respects to my mother. His horse stumbled in the court-yard, he fell, injured his leg, and could not be moved for three months, and during that time I was at Southlands. My mother bade Mistress Restwold to come to Denham to tend Anthony, and this she did. In consequence I met with Joan often, for I could not of a sudden cease to visit Denham, where I had been in the habit of seeing my mother

daily, and indeed she demanded it and would have grieved had I missed a visit.

Now Mary, so long as Henry had been in the King's Bodyguard at Windsor, had been loth to live in London, and had stayed either at Southlands or with her mother at Bray. And during the reign of the late King she had still remained in the country for the greater part of the year, for there meseems she had most opportunity of meeting Henry, albeit I knew nothing of this at the time.

But when Henry joined the household of the Princess Elizabeth, and the Princess was at Hatfield, then Mary grew tired of the country, and followed me to London ; nor did she visit Southlands but rarely, alleging now this excuse and now that. But when she heard of Anthony Restwold's mishap and that he was living in my father's house at Denham, and that Joan was there tending him, she returned in the summer to Southlands.

Anthony had already been laid up for a month when she arrived, and they expected

him to remain two more months before he could move about once more. And during that month I had seen Mistress Restwold and conversed with her, but now, as before, I had exchanged no word with her that all and sundry might not have heard, and I was mindful of my promise to Mary, but when Mary came, as soon as I set eyes upon her, I knew that some thought was busy in her heart. Not that she spoke a reproach or showed any sign of anger or suspicion. She gave rather all her attention to Anthony ; and Anthony, who was prone to catch fire at the sight of bright eyes as dry straw is to burn, was soon inflamed with a great passion for her, as became clear later ; but, and I knew this at the time, Mary gave no thought to Anthony, it was jealousy of Mistress Restwold that caused her to ensnare Anthony and to kindle his passion. Joan had stolen her husband, so she thought, wrongly, and so she would steal Joan's.

She thought I was Mistress Restwold's lover,

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and our silence, and the care I took never to seek her society, confirmed what she suspected.

And so things went on, until Anthony was hale again and able to move, and the eve of his departure came, and this was at the end of August. During this time, so we knew later, Henry had with burning entreaties begged Mary to come back to London, and vowed that he could not live without her, and she had put him off with any idle excuse, being sure of Henry, and not troubling to be careful of his feelings. At the end Henry could no longer bear this, and he arrived at Denham on the eve of Anthony's departure without announcing his arrival.

My father was away from home ; my mother was resting, and Mistress Restwold had gone to her father's house to make ready for Anthony, and I was busy with books, reading the pleadings of a suit, when I heard the clatter of hoofs in the courtyard. Anthony and Mary were in the garden, but this I knew

not. I waited for a space of time, thinking that if a visitor it should be, he would be announced. And then, when the delay seemed to me over-long, I walked down into the hall, but found no-one. At last I came upon William Orchard, who told me that Master Henry had arrived ; that he had gone to the stables, and would be with me presently. I waited a time, but he did not come. I walked round to the stables ; his horse was there, but there was no sign of Henry. He had gone out through the big gate, so one of the grooms told me. I went back to the hall and waited. It was plain my mother had heard nothing, or else she would have come down, but her closet was on the other side of the house, in the wing. Presently Henry came into the hall. He was pale, but I had no time to wonder whether his mood were strange, when his angry words—so enraged was he that his speech was quiet—enlightened me.

“ I have been walking in the garden,” he said. “ I entered the garden by the wood

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through the small gate, and there I found a pleasant sight: your wife, Mary, in the arms of your guest, Anthony Restwold."

"That is a lie, Henry," I said, and my rage was as great as his.

"A lie is it?" he said, mockingly, "and news to you? Maybe it is news to you that your wife is everybody's wife and you are the only man in the country who is unaware of it."

"You are a liar, Henry," I said, "a liar and a coward, and that we have always known, and you abandoned Edward in the hour of danger and left him to die alone and undefended."

He drew his sword and lunged at me, but I was prepared and had time to parry, and he slipped on the polished floor, so I knocked his sword from his hand. He smiled like a naughty child who strives to turn an outburst of temper into a matter for laughter.

"I was wrong to provoke you," he said. "I meant nothing of what I said; it was your solemn face provoked me." And he held out his hand. I was in half a mind whether

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to take it, when he leapt upon me with his dagger.

“Oh, double traitor,” I cried, and I seized his arm, and we grappled with one another and rolled on the floor, and after a fierce struggle I wrested the dagger from his hand and I had him by the throat, when William Orchard came in and tore us apart.

“This is a sorry sight,” he said, “to see two brothers quarrelling, and you will disturb her Ladyship, and what would she think if she were to find you thus?”

“It was nothing, William,” said Henry, rising still panting and pale from the ground, with beads of sweat on his forehead. “It was a bout in jest,” and he strode from the hall, and we saw him no more.

Presently Mary entered the hall, calm and stately, and said that Anthony had gone to rest some time ago.

“Henry has been here,” I said.

“Henry?” she said, and her face betrayed nothing. “Is he staying the night?”

“No,” I said, “he has gone, and I know not whither.”

She looked at me, at my unsheathed rapier, which lay on the floor, and at Henry’s dagger, which lay by the hearth ; my torn ruff, and disarrayed clothes.

“What has happened ?” she asked.

“Henry and I had a wrestling bout,” I said. “As we used to in old times. I think we will say nothing to my mother of his visit.”

“That is as you will,” she said scornfully. “If you have aught to conceal, conceal it. I have nothing to conceal.”

“No one has accused you,” I said, “but I beseech you to be on your guard against Henry, for he is as treacherous as a wolf.”

Mary turned pale.

“You were always jealous of Henry,” she said.

And she went out of the house and rode back to Southlands. I saw her no more that evening. Nor did my mother come down again that evening, and I rode back to Southlands and supped alone, for Mary had retired.

CHAPTER XII

THE next morning Anthony left Denham, and during the autumn of that year the plot was hatched. Henry went back to Hatfield, and Anthony Restwold likewise, and the conspirators caused a rumour to get abroad that King Philip had expended the revenues of the Crown on the purposes of Spain, although my father, hearing of this rumour, said it was as far from the truth as might be, seeing that the King had brought treasure into the kingdom, had distributed much of it in presents, and had spent large sums to defray the costs of the marriage, and the remainder was in the Royal exchequer ; and none could know this so well as my father. As I have already related, the conspirators had been advised by their French supporters to

stay their hand and await a more favourable season, but there were hotheads among them who would brook no delay. The leaders, among them desperate men such as Kingston and Staunton, deaf to the advice of their allies in France, were determined to carry out the plot.

After noising the rumour about the exchequer and the misuse of the bullion by the King of Spain, which found willing ears as the Spanish marriage had been hateful to many, they planned to make an armed attack on the Treasure of the Queen's exchequer at Westminster in which there was of the Queen's Treasury about fifty thousand pounds, to surprise the guard and to take the monies which were stored there. Now the servants of the Lady Elizabeth were privy to the plot, and among them Henry, my brother, and Anthony Restwold.

Henry was mad with jealousy of Anthony, and Mary, although she loved Henry, how much at the time I, woe betide, knew little—so far from allaying his suspicions or soothing his

jealous fears—took pains, it seemed, to increase them. She was angered against him for she suspected he had said something to me, but what she knew not. She came up to London and she was careful to let Henry know that she still held communication with Anthony and she pretended to favour the latter, thereby driving Henry to the extreme pitch of madness and rage. There was a feast at the house of the French Duke at which they met, and at which Henry spoke harshly to Mary and ordered her never to set eyes on Anthony if she would preserve his love, and Mary told him that she loved Anthony better than him, and this she told me herself hereafter.

And Henry, maddened with rage, disclosed the whole machinery of the plot to my father on the eve of its execution, thinking thereby to be revenged upon Anthony, and, being confident that he would thus save his own life, and that should he himself be in jeopardy, his father would see that he came to no harm.

But he knew his father too little.

The next morning my father sent for me to Blackfriars and told me of the plot and of its discovery, and that Henry was one of the conspirators.

“How was it discovered?” I asked.

“Henry betrayed his fellow conspirators to me,” he said.

I asked him what he would do.

“Everything has been done already,” he said, “and the enemies of the Queen are already lodged in the Tower.”

“And Henry?” I asked.

“Henry was the first to be arrested,” he said, “at my behest.”

Henry was further questioned in the Tower and he, under threat of torment, and another of his fellow officers, Werne, one of the Lady Elizabeth’s household, under the torment itself, told all they knew about the conspiracy and swore that the Lady Elizabeth herself was cognisant of all, and more, that Lord Bray, Mary’s father, had been privy to the plot.

But the other members of the household said

not a word, and neither threat nor all the engines of the Tower could extort a word from the lips of Anthony Restwold, who stoutly denied that the Lady Elizabeth knew aught thereof. But Lord Bray was arrested and taken to the Tower to be questioned. And Mary came incontinent to London.

Lord Bray said no word and denied that the Lady Elizabeth had been privy to the plot. Nevertheless the conspirators were all of them condemned, and Lord Bray, Henry, Restwold among them, for high treason. It was now that the grief and fury of Mary became fearful to behold. She came to me and said that she would save her father's life and Henry's at whatever cost, for she knew and she vowed that I knew that they were innocent of conspiracy, and had been merely the witless tools in the hands of the Lady Elizabeth, who desired nothing so much as the Queen's death and the establishment of the reformed religion.

"Your father can save them, and I will compel him to," she said.

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I said I would be glad if she could prevail upon him, but that for my part I knew that nothing would bring him to believe the Lady Elizabeth to be guilty.

“It is because you hate Henry,” she said.

Then she begged me to stand by her when she saw my father, and this I promised I would do, but I said that my mother’s words would have the greater effect, for she was due from Denham that day, and presently she came. My father was at the Mint, and I was able to recount to my mother all that had taken place before she saw my father. I told her of Mary’s wildness and fury, saying it was on account of her father, and my mother said :

“It is well that she has at last come to love her father, better late than never, and even though it needed the fear of the scaffold to bring about the payment of the love she owed him.”

“Mary swears,” I said, “that her father and Henry are in no wise to blame, never having

been privy to the plot. They were arrested as having been of the Lady Elizabeth's household, and Mary swears that she has certain knowledge that the Lady Elizabeth is herself to blame, and that her father and Henry obeyed orders in blindness, as they were in duty bound to do."

I knew that Mary knew full well she was to blame for Henry's treachery, to which he had been spurred by jealousy, but of this I said nothing to my mother, who as I thought, knew nothing of what had passed between Henry and Mary.

And my mother said :

" You are wasting words with me, Robert."

And then I knew she saw everything as plainly as if she had read it in a book.

And she said again :

" Whoever is to blame, this thing cannot and shall not be. Edmund cannot bring his own flesh and blood, his son and his daughter-in-law's father to the scaffold."

And I told my mother that she would find my father as unyielding as granite, all the more

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because it was his own flesh and blood who was to blame, and that he would hear no word against the Princess Elizabeth, as he was loyal to all the offspring of King Henry, his master, and would remain so until the end.

And then my father came from the Mint and we approached him : my mother, Mary and myself. My mother said :

“ You must obtain Henry’s pardon and Lord Bray’s.”

“ Henry,” said my father, “ has been a traitor to the Crown and a traitor to the Lady Elizabeth as well, and so has Lord Bray.”

“ But,” said my mother, “ they are not to blame. They were led to the plot by the household of the Lady Elizabeth who are rebels one and all, and the Lady Elizabeth would have rewarded them if the plot had had a happy issue, as you know full well.”

And my father said :

“ I would rather cut off my hand than ask for pardon of the Queen for Henry, for not only has he plotted against her Grace, but he

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has thrown the blame on the Lady Elizabeth, whom he had sworn to serve and who is innocent of all that has happened, and, as for Lord Bray, being older, his blame is the greater."

And my mother said :

" I rather think that the plot was hatched with the knowledge of the Lady Elizabeth and that, had she not given her consent, there would have been no plot."

And my father was wrathful, and said he would hear no word against the Lady Elizabeth for he had sworn to serve all the children of King Henry the Eighth, and they all of them could claim and count upon his loyalty.

And my mother pleaded :

" Henry is weak and rash, and it was no fault of his that he fell among that gang of rebels. He is good at heart and he is our son and I love him, and we cannot leave him to the scaffold and the gibbet, and, as for Lord Bray, I believe him to be innocent and the victim of slander."

" Whose slander ? " my father asked.

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“Henry’s,” he answered himself. “Henry is a traitor and it is not the first time he has betrayed his trust, for he left Edward in the field, and fled when he should have defended him against no great odds.”

And my mother strove to speak, but my father said :

“It is in vain ; I know all that took place that day in France, and I knew it from the first, although you tried to conceal it.”

And then my mother wept and fell upon her knees and said :

“He is our son, we brought him into the world, and we cannot blame him ; it is we who are to blame.”

And my father said :

“It is no matter of blame or no blame, there is no matter of son or no son, I am the servant of the Queen, and I have sworn to serve her as I served her father, and I would defend her against any traitor, whether he should be my own son, father, brother or wife.”

And my mother looked at us and closed her

eyes, meaning, as I saw, that there was nothing more to be said.

Mary, who up to that moment had been as dumb as a stone, now found her voice.

“ It is all a lie,” she said. “ my father is innocent, and I know it. I can prove it. I know, and my mother knows it for certain, that the Lady Elizabeth was privy to the plot, for letters from the French King to his Envoy in London have been intercepted in which it was said after the conclusion of the truce between France and Spain that the Lady Elizabeth was to stay her hand, and not to undertake what was in her mind, for it would spoil all, and they would lose the fruits of their machinations, and that it was necessary to be cautious and prudent.”

And my father said to her :

“ How did you come by this news ? ”

“ My father told my mother,” she said.

And my father said :

“ Your father is too honourable a man to have repeated such things, even if he had been

privy to them. Nor would he have said of his own free will what torment could not make him say. As for the French, they are liars and knaves, and the plot has been hatched by them, and by them alone, and they hatched this plot with one hand while they concluded a truce with another ; and all they sought and all they seek is to stir up strife in England ; they care not either for the Queen or for the Lady Elizabeth, but they seek alone our ruin and discomfiture. And again I ask," he said to Mary, " how had you cognisance of the Frenchman's letter, for I know your father knew nothing of it, nor would he have spoken of it had he known."

" My mother told me," said Mary.

" I know who told you, and I know why the news is false," said my father, " the news came from Henry, my son, who is a traitor and who has betrayed his Queen and the Lady Elizabeth."

And Mary turned pale, and she said.:

" It is all false, all false, all that you say of

Henry, and you say that because you have never loved him for his wildness in his youth ; and as for the tale of his deserting Edward in the wars, that was invented by Robert, who was ever jealous of Henry. And if Henry and my father perish on the scaffold, I will put such a curse upon you that shall blast you and destroy the last of your stock and cause it to wither and burn in Hell, and you shall feel the sting of my curse even through the fires. And I know full well," she continued, in her fury, shaking her fist at my father, " why you will do nothing to save them, it is because you are a heretic, and have been a heretic always, and you fear anything that would harm the Princess Elizabeth, who, you know, would murder the Queen to-morrow if she could and destroy the Church, and you are biding your time."

She could say no more, and she sank on the floor in tears. And my mother said :

" We must pay no heed to her, she is distraught with grief for her father." And she



said to me : “ Come, we will lead her away. For she must speak no more of the matter to your father at the moment.”

Albeit later my mother tried to move him yet once more, alleging that if Henry suffered she would die. For in spite of all, she still loved Henry more than all upon earth, and this my father knew, and although he remained calm he seemed to have grown ten years older. But all was of no avail, and the conspirators were hanged, and among them Anthony Restwold, Werne and Henry. But Lady Bray obtained access to the Queen, and, swearing that her husband was innocent, obtained his pardon, and, after remaining a year in the Tower, he was set free.

The day before they suffered, my father said I must take my mother and Mary to Denham, but they would not move from London, for they hoped against hope that some miracle would bring about a pardon at the last, but no miracle came to pass. My mother saw Henry in the Tower, and Mary

had a glimpse of Henry through the bars of his prison. They suffered bravely, and Henry as bravely as the rest, which would have been a grain of solace to my father had his soul admitted of comfort.

The next day we rode back to Denham, and Mary said no word and heeded me no more than as if I were a painted image, or as if she had been turned into stone.

But the next day, when we found ourselves alone together, her grief and her anger burst their bonds, and found utterance, and she told me that her hatred of me was greater than she could express. She had loved Henry with all her strength and might of body and soul, and that she had been to blame, she alone, for his death, for Henry had betrayed from love of her and for love of her, and she in no way blamed him, not even for having brought about her own father's peril and almost his death, if he had brought it about—which he had not done ; it was Werne who had played false.

“ I never loved Anthony,” she said, “ but I

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hated Joan, and I took Anthony away to spite Joan because I knew that Joan loved you, and that you loved Joan, and that you had married me, loving Joan in spite of what you had sworn to me. For I asked you to swear not to marry me if, when I left England for France, you should come to love another after that time. And you swore it and yet you broke your oath."

I had nothing to say, for it was the truth that she was speaking, albeit she had not wished me to wed Joan nor had she loved me when she married me, and yet I was to blame. And, greatly as I was to blame towards Mary, I felt more to blame towards Joan, for it was through me and owing to me that her husband had suffered torment and then death; for had I not loved Joan, which I could not deny, the whole sorry story would not have come about. And yet none of these things had been of my will, but Providence, ever just, had called upon each of us to pay for his deed, for in this world we pay for all we do, and if

not in this world, then in the world that is to come.

I told Mary that I knew I had been in some measure to blame, and this only angered her the more, and she accused me of being Joan's lover, and of having lied to her, and how she had always known it, and that this was the second time, I had broken my oath. I swore to her that this was not true, but she believed no word of what I said.

And she said :

“ I am glad at least that Anthony suffered on the scaffold, for he is to blame for all this.”

I was wrathful at this and she mocked me and said :

“ Small wonder that you are wrathful, seeing that you were his wife's lover and you thought both to deceive me ; I knew all from the first ; I knew all even when I was at Bruges and Wriothesley came to see me and told me how Joan had ensnared you, and I saw your falsity when you came to see me on my return,

but I gave you a day in which to tell me the truth but you did not avail yourself of it. And then, when I asked you to see Joan no more, and you swore you would not see her, you broke your oath once more, and I could read every word that passed in silence between you, and it was then that I began to love Henry, and I loved him as I never loved you. He was a goodly lover and I regret no moment of his love."

She taunted me with Henry having been to the war and at my having stayed at home, and she said that I was to blame for Edward's death, and had cast the blame on Henry to shield myself. I said nothing, for what was there to say? And she said that she could endure the sight of me no longer and no more, and that she would go to her mother's and stay there.

I stayed at Denham with my mother for a while till I was recalled to London. My mother never recovered from the impact of these happenings and the sharpness of her

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sorrow ; but she already frail fell into a decline and she died before the month was ended, in the presence of my father and of myself, houselled and annealed, and fortified by the rites of the Church.

CHAPTER XIII

WHATEVER my father might say, I knew that among those most cognisant of the affair it was thought that the Lady Elizabeth had been privy to the Dudley conspiracy and some were in favour of her being arraigned for high treason.

The Queen consulted my father on the matter, and he, believing that the evidence with regard to the guilt of the Lady Elizabeth, was tainted, advised her to do nothing, but others thought otherwise, and the Lord Chancellor was neutral. It might have fared ill with the Lady Elizabeth, but for King Philip, who knew that but for the Lady Elizabeth the crown, on the death of the Queen, would pass to the Queen of Scots, and he feared that such a succession would increase

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the power of France, his chiefest rival, so he ordered all inquiry to cease, and the Queen sent the Lady Elizabeth a ring in token of her affection, and said that the Lady Elizabeth was innocent, and that her officers had misused her name without her cognisance.

And that is what my father believed, for one day I ventured to speak my doubts, and he bade me be silent, saying that no son of his should cast a doubt on the good faith of King Henry's daughters, and that we more than any had good reason to know the accusations were false, for did they not proceed, be it said to our lasting shame, from Henry?

About that time I met with Andrew Hynd once more, who, for a long spell, had been in the Germanies, and I asked him whether he still believed in the triumph of the Reformers.

“More than ever,” he said. “They are only kept in check by fear, as they are checked here.”

I told him that the following of the Reformers was not great in this country. being

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limited to the Hot Gospellers.

He said that I was mistaken, that there were many among the powerful who were Reformers at heart. But they concealed their opinions, fearing the displeasure of the Queen, and the fires of Smithfield. As for himself, he saw little to choose between Huguenot, Calvinist, Lutheran and Catholic, but he was sure that the new doctrines must triumph.

“But the Lutherans,” I said, “will not look kindly on the new doctrines.”

“Maybe,” he answered, “but I hope that the Reformers will triumph over the Church, and all the branches that have fallen away from her.”

“Then you are become a Pagan, Andrew?” I said.

“No,” he said, “I am no Pagan. I would not go back to the gods of Greece, but I am in search of something new, something that shall set us free and reconcile all warring sects and deliver us from those who tyrannise over our thought and our freedom and our knowledge.

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I hear the hoofs of a horse, but I cannot yet tell who is the rider.”

“ Pray God it may not be the Anti-Christ or the Devil,” I said.

“ No, not the Anti-Christ,” he said, “ but some new prophet who will give us not a sword, but peace, and a Catholic Church purged of abuse, and at peace with herself and with others.”

“ That we have been told will happen in the end, but before the dawn of that day, we have been told there will first be wars, and disasters, and false prophets appearing, such as shall deceive the very elect. Beware of the false prophets.”

“ Nothing can be worse than what now is,” he said, “ the State is sick, the Church is sick, we are in need of a physician with a knife.”

“ If every man thinks he can administer physic,” I said, “ the sick are like to die.”

“ You belong to the past, Robert,” he said, “ you have stayed in one rut. You do not guess what is happening in the world around.”

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“I have seen,” I said, “the destruction of much that is beautiful and goodly. And I have seen what has been destroyed, and taken away, replaced by the less good. How can you hope for me to have faith in the new age, and your new nostrums? All the changes that I have witnessed hitherto seem to me for the worse.”

“That is because you live in blinkers, like a beast of burden, and refuse to see the new light that is rising in the East. I think, Robert, we are on the eve of wondrous things and marvellous happenings.”

“Pray God I may die before they come to pass. I have seen enough of the new.”

Andrew laughed.

“You would not think thus if you had travelled as I have done, and had you heard the men I have heard talk in France and in the Germanies. You have lived too long in one place, and you are heedless of the march of time. The past is done and buried for ever.”

“Leave me in my little corner, Andrew,” I

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said. "I am too old now to creep out of it, and, Heaven knows, it is full enough of sorrow."

"One day," said Andrew, "you will come to acknowledge that I was right. But right or wrong, my affection for you will not die," and with these words he took his leave.

I was not to meet him save but once more and in strange circumstance.

Mary remained at her mother's, and I went once and she refused to let me see her, sending a message that she would never see me again as long as she lived.

My father went on with his daily work and spoke never of what had befallen. Then came war again with France, and the loss of Calais, which to the Queen was a mortal wound. But in the spring the French were defeated by the Spaniards on the banks of the Aa, thanks to our Admiral Malin, who with twelve small vessels, entered with the tide and brought his ships to bear on the enemy's line. In this action my brother George was wounded, and came home to us. This was of some solace for

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my father, for we had seldom seen George during the last years, he having lived for the greater part of the time afloat.

In the autumn of the same year the Queen died. But shortly before the death of the Queen in November, news came from Lady Bray that Mary was sick of the same fever from which the Queen was suffering, and of which thousands already had died, and Lady Bray summoned me to Bray, and there I saw Mary once more, lying in her couch, with pale cheeks, sunken and fiery eyes, and yet sensible and able to speak.

“I have sent for you, Robert,” she said, “because I am dying. I said I would not see you again as long as I lived, but now that I am dying I could not forego the rites of the Church, and before I can receive the absolution I must needs forgive my enemies and those whom I have hated, and chief among those are you. And now that I am dying, it is not only with my lips, and for convenience, that I forgive you, neither is it for fear of the fires of

Hell, but the veil between life and what is beyond seems to have worn thin, and behind that veil there is, meseems, a light that burns exceeding bright, and which makes the objects of this world seem tawdry and of little account. I see now that in my lifetime I set my heart on baubles that were brittle and on toys that were of no value, and that in hating others I was merely hating myself, and that in harming others I was doing injury to myself alone. None have I hurt so much as I have hurt you, and I ask you now to forgive me. It was wrong of me to wed you, for at the time I loved you not, and I married you not from love but out of jealousy of Joan, for I knew that you loved her and that she loved you. And later I suffered jealousy again, although I know that when you swore you had not played me false, you were telling the truth. I pretended I believed you not, even to myself, but I know now that it was otherwise. I was deceiving myself, and with purpose. So now I ask you and your father to forgive me, for I

have been an evil woman, and I have brought nothing but bane and sorrow to those around me. Yet I pray that when I am gone some share of happiness may yet come to you, and that haply you may wed again.

“As to Henry, it was I who was to blame, for I, by capturing Anthony Restwold, stung him to fury, and it was thus owing to me that he revealed the plot, and that he and Anthony suffered, but he forgave me, and you must forgive me likewise.”

I knelt by her bedside and wept, and told her that I forgave her all there was to forgive, feeling the more guilty myself, for in such matters is one to blame more than the other? And had I not been cowardly, and had I told her the truth when she first came back from Bruges, all would have been different, but such was not the will of Providence.

And that night she received the last Sacraments, and the next morning she died while Mass was being said in her chamber, during the *Agnus Dei*, and a week later the

Queen died in a like manner.

I brought to my father the news of Mary's death, and of our reconciliation, and of her last message to him, and he was well pleased, although he said that she had done a deal of mischief in her lifetime, and was fortunate to have been allowed so good a death.

The Lady Elizabeth was proclaimed Queen, but at the same time Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots (at the command of her father-in-law, the King of France, and though it were but for form), assumed the title of Queen of England, and quartered the English arms with those of Scotland, and this trivial event was of momentous consequence to our family fortunes, for it confirmed in my father's heart the determination to be true, whatever the price might be, to the children of his late master.

The answer of the Queen's Council, although they knew the matter was of no import, was the imprisonment of the Bishop of Winchester, the fining of the Bishop of London, the relinquishing of the seals by Archbishop Heath,

and a proclamation forbidding the clergy to preach, and ordering them to observe the established religion until consultation might be had in Parliament by the Queen and the three Estates.

The prelates although they had the courtesy to attend the Queen's coronation would not themselves have do with the crowning, save the Bishop of Carlisle, who crowned the Queen according to Pontifical ritual, and Her Grace took the accustomed oath.

When Parliament met five new peers, in favour of reform, had been added to the Upper House, and in the Lower House a list of Court candidates was sent to the Sheriffs from whom the members were to be chosen, thus assuring a majority. The statutes passed in the late reign for the support of the ancient religion were repealed. It was enacted that the new Book of Common Prayer, with certain alterations, was alone to be used by the ministers in all Churches, under penalties of forfeiture, deprivation and death, and the

jurisdiction of every foreign prelate was utterly abolished.

In spite of the clergy and the Universities, these statutes were passed.

After the dissolution of Parliament, the Queen summoned the Bishops and ordered them to conform to the new statutes, but all with the exception of one refused.

My father, in the meanwhile, was confirmed in his post as Master of the Mint by the Queen. It was after this event that I approached him and asked him what his course of conduct was likely to be with regard to the new statutes, and whether he had joined the Reformers and expected me to do likewise.

“I am a Catholic,” he said, “as I have always been, and always shall be. I have never busied myself about points of doctrine, which is the affair of divines and not of laymen. And I mean to keep the oath which I swore to the Queen’s father, my master, that I would be loyal to himself and to his children, an oath that you swore with me on the same day.

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And now more than ever it behoves us to be careful of our oath, seeing that the Queen of Scots has proclaimed herself our Queen (which means that our Queen is a bastard), and has cast an eye on the throne, as my late master foresaw."

"But," I objected, "how can we remain good Catholics if it be unlawful to hear Mass?"

"We can hear Mass as well as ever," said my father. "The statutes do not affect us."

"But the Oath of Supremacy? All magistrates are bound to take it."

"And that oath will I gladly take," said my father, "as I took it for the Queen's father, my late master."

I argued it would be hard for us to hear Mass if there were no priests to say it, and my father said :

"There will always be too many priests in this country."

I told him I feared the laws would become more harsh as time went on and as the Reformers became more bold.

“ There will be no new laws,” he answered me, “ unless rebels cause such to be enacted. If men rebel against the authority of the Queen, they must be punished.”

I spoke of the conduct of the Bishops who had with one exception, sacrificed everything rather than submit to the new Statutes, and my father said the prelates of England had always been a stubborn and a headstrong brood, for ever arrogating to themselves authority which was not theirs ; that he for one rejoiced that the Queen had repudiated the jurisdiction of all foreign prelates ; and the Book of Common Prayer would serve as well for the common folk as any other, considering that they were ignorant, and that to them a prayer said in English was not better understood than one said in Latin. As for ourselves, we were free to worship as we pleased.

“ But will that always be ? ” I asked.

“ The new-fangled passes, the old remains or comes back,” my father said. “ This new

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Book of Common Prayer is but a makeshift for the present time. It will not last. I have seen all this happen before. We shall go back to the old in the end, but in the meantime we must keep our oath, serve the Queen, and maintain the authority of the Crown that is all that we have to do."

I told my father that my conscience told me that the new statutes were wrong and that the Bishops were in the right, and that I felt I should resign my office as Privy Councillor.

My father looked at me and said :

" Two of my sons are dead, and one of my sons betrayed his Sovereign. And will the only son that I have left break his oath ? That would indeed bring me down in sorrow to my grave."

I had not the heart to say more, and I inclined myself to his will, sorely against the promptings of my heart, and the dictates of my conscience. But I could not bring myself to come into open conflict with my father seeing that he had already suffered so much.

And it was now that I met once more with Mistress Restwold, who, since her husband had suffered, had lived in great retirement with an old lady, a cousin of her husband in Norfolk, but now she came to our county again, and I met with her in London, and she summoned me to visit her, which I had not dared do, seeing that it was owing to Henry's treachery that her husband had suffered. And I waited upon her, and she talked to me as in years gone by, saying that she thought no ill of me, and she had known how all had come to pass, and that she knew how much perturbed I had been for her sake.

"You must put all that from your mind now," she said. "You were in no wise to blame, and I grieve for your father, for I know how deeply he must have been stricken by such happenings, especially after he had lost his son, Edward."

And we talked of old times, and I knew that my heart had not changed, and that all was for me as it had been before.

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And that summer she was once more at her father's house near Denham, and I saw her often, and it seemed that every barrier between us was broken down, and I wondered whether my wife's dying words had been prophetic.

CHAPTER XIV

THERE followed for me then the end of one summer and the beginning of one autumn, a period of blissful days. The storms of the past seemed to be over, the auguries for the future seemed better, so that I feared to mar the present seeming serenity by any question or proposal. I lived in the present thinking neither of to-morrow nor of yesterday, content to float upon the stream, in the calm and the sunshine that seemed too fair to last. It was, as if the spring had been unburied and were enjoying a second life in the serenity of the reaped fields and the glory of the golden woods. I was afraid to disturb the silence lest I should break the spell.

Joan and I talked of everything save the future. We were content in each other's com-

pany with little need for speech. Her two sons were grown up. The eldest was in the Queen's Body Guard, and the second was a student at Oxford.

And Joan although the mother of two tall sons, had never so it seemed, been more worthy of my worship.

One day we were walking through the woods of Southlands. It was in September, and the trees were turning yellow, and summer seemed to be obstinately lingering. Joan spoke of my father, and I told her that I feared there was a barrier between us, for he knew that in my heart I did not approve of his conduct concerning the new Statutes and the old religion.

Joan asked me what opinion I held about such matters, and I told her that I feared we were closing our eyes to what would prove to be the end of the old religion, nay of all religion in the land.

She then told me that she had no sense for the business of any other world but this, and no understanding of such matters, but that her

husband Anthony had welcomed the Reform and brought up her sons in secret to be Reformers, and that he had always desired the accession of the present Queen thinking that she would perhaps favour the Reformers.

As for herself, she was all for toleration, and could not bear the thought of priestly interference, and religious trials ; deprivations and burnings in the name of religion were to her abhorrent. She therefore would welcome the triumph of the Reformers, and she thought the advisers of the Queen were acting wisely. I asked her if she did not miss the Mass in the Churches, and she said she liked better the present Book of Common Prayer.

“ But you have nothing against the old religion ? ” I said.

“ Yes,” she said, “ I have all against it. It is to me a bondage of the spirit. I accepted it as a child, for I knew no better, but now I see that freedom is of all Heaven’s gifts the greatest, and that which I prize most greatly.”

“ But,” I said, “ you have nothing against

those who cleave to the older Faith."

"Churches," she said to me, "are of small account, and the wrangles of prelates are to me odious. I find what Faith I need here in the woods, and the fields, in the song of the birds and the sight of the flowers, the fruits and the berries, and whether a man goes to this Church or that Church seems to me of no account. Perhaps I am without what men call Faith."

"But what," I asked, "of the life to come?"

"I feel that all will be well," she said, "but I have no wish to live again. One life has been enough for me. Sleep will content me."

"But if we wake?"

"Then I believe all will still be well. I have no belief in the old tale of punishment and reward. I ask alone that death may come to me suddenly, while I am tasting to the full the light of the sun and the beauty of the world."

"Then," I said, "you would think me but a fool to cleave to the old teaching that we

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were taught to believe as children?"

"Do you still believe?" she asked, in wonder.

"I believe in spite of myself."

"Everyone must judge for himself," she said, "I am for freedom for all. Maybe that I am foolish, but I have seen too much and endured too much from religious dissension. It was owing to these that Anthony perished."

"But," I interposed, "Anthony perished for no religious cause, but for conspiring against the Crown. He perished as any of us would perish to-day if we conspired against the authority of the Queen."

"The quarrel was religious at the core," she said, "in spite of all that was said. Anthony knew, and I knew, that the conspirators hoped to restore the reformed religion. They had little love for Queen Mary and still less for King Philip and the foreign jurisdiction."

I kept silent, not wishing to open ancient wounds nor to revive past sorrow.

Presently she said to me :

“ But to you, Robert, all that is dearer than all else.”

“ All what ? ” I asked, but I knew what she was about to say.

“ Your Faith, the old religion.”

I bowed my head.

“ And would you give up anything in the world for it ? ” she asked.

“ Everything,” I answered, “ that is to say almost everything.”

And I spoke thus because I knew at that moment, if Joan were now, in return for her heart and hand, to ask me to give up my Faith I would consent, so great was my love for her.

She sighed so sadly that I wondered what thought was passing through her mind.

We walked on in silence for a few moments, and it was then, in the silent woods, on that gilded afternoon, that I for the second time in my life asked her to be my wife.

She seemed not to be surprised at my faltering words and yet to smile upon me from

a distance, as it were a goddess I thought, talking to a mortal.

"I will tell you to-morrow," she said, and we walked home, and I left her at her father's house.

I slept little that night thinking of the future and the past, and wondering whether or no I was fated to find at last a safe haven of peace and the fulfilment of my oldest and fondest dream and of the hope that had seemed to be so irrevocably lost.

The next day I went again to Brooke Hall, and Joan met me smiling, but so it seemed to me sad. She led me into the garden, and we sat upon a stone bench.

"I have thought deeply about what you asked," she said, "and I know it must never be."

"But why?" I asked, and a desperation came over me.

"There is a gulf between us," she said.

I was for the moment silenced, and I asked her if it were divergence in matters of

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Faith that she had been thinking of, and she assented.

I said there was no divergence. I became eloquent. I told her I was willing to become a Reformer if she so willed, but she stemmed the torrent of my words gently.

“It is deeper than all that,” she said. “To you these things are all in all, although you may not think so now, and to me they are nothing. It is no difference of this Creed or that sect, of this ritual, or that practice. It is what lies beneath and above all such things. You may think you care nothing for such things now, but I know you better, and I could not have you give it up on my account. It would only mean lasting infelicity for both of us.”

“But why should I give up anything?” I protested. “Why can not each of us have his own way of thinking in such matters?”

“Because it cannot be,” she said. “You know it cannot be. We might in these times at any moment be driven apart by the

necessity of a choice or the claims of an allegiance, and our choice and our allegiance in such things can never be the same. You may not know it now, but you will know it, and I know it already."

I protested, I argued, I raved, I implored, I wept, but all in vain.

"To-morrow," she said, "I am going to London to see my son, and then I shall go back again to Norfolk, to my cousins. Do not think that I love you any the less. Never have I loved you more, but it is for that reason that I cannot be the instrument of your unhappiness and your undoing."

And then, in spite of all I could say, she bade me farewell. And that is the last time I ever set eyes upon her.

In one way her prophecy was fulfilled all too soon. The Queen was suffering from the smallpox, and there was a rumour that she was about to die. The soothsayers said she would not outlive the month of March. The nephews of Cardinal Pole determined to quit

the country if she died, to land with a body of men in Wales, and proclaim Mary Stuart Queen. The plan was betrayed and the Poles were taken, arraigned and condemned, on their own confession, and they were afterwards pardoned. But this enabled the Queen to ask supplies to fight the House of Guise, who were blamed for the conspiracy. And an Act was brought before Parliament against those of the ancient Faith.

Already the oath of supremacy, which I and most others deemed no different than renunciation of the Faith, was binding on many, but by the new Bill it was proposed to extend the obligation to others : to members of the House of Commons, to schoolmasters, and attorneys, to all persons who had ever held office in the Church or in any ecclesiastical court, during the present or the last three reigns : to all who should openly disapprove of the established worship, or should celebrate or hear others celebrate any Private Mass : that is to say, to all the Catholics of the kingdom.

Moreover, a first refusal to take the oath was to be punished by *præmunire*, a second by death, as in cases of treason. Only the temporal Peers were exempt from the operation of the Bill, which was passed after a struggle. The measure could not have been carried out in the letter at once without raising gibbets and scaffolds in every corner of the land, and the Queen in horror at such an happening gave orders through the Metropolitan to the Bishops to secretly proceed with caution, and never to make a second tender without first acquainting him of the circumstances.

Convocation had assembled at the same time with Parliament, and had drawn up a new Creed based upon the doctrine published by the authority of King Edward VI, in another set of articles, and this time thirty-nine, and these were subscribed by both Houses of Convocation. And it was proposed that whosoever should preach, declare, or write anything in derogation of the said articles should be subject to the penalties of heresy. Heresy, as

I had always feared, had now become treason.

Had this design become law, every dissenter in the land would have been subject to the penalties of heresy, and a final breach between myself and my father must most surely have come to pass.

But the design was defeated by the Council.

Over the subject of the new enactments such as were passed, my father and I had our last disagreement, I saying what I had said before, that our religion was on the way to being stamped out, and he maintaining that it was as always before, rebels and conspirators and the House of France and the Queen of Scotland who were to blame, and that the authority of the Crown must be maintained. But, although he maintained this as firmly and as vehemently as ever, I could not but think that in his heart of hearts he was beginning to harbour a doubt. He was now nearing the allotted span of man's life, and, although still hale and hearty, a melancholy seemed to have settled upon his spirit. Nevertheless, he went about his busi-

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ness, and his mind had lost none of its vigour, and he enjoyed the favour of the Queen, who was grateful for the loyalty he had always shown to her family, and for the services he had rendered to the Crown, especially those concerning the coin of the realm. And so our lives proceeded in the same rut for two more years, when he fell sick at Denham. My brother George and myself were summoned to his side, and he bade me swear never to take the side of the rebels, which I did, but nothing was said of the oath of supremacy. A priest was brought to him in secret, to administer the last Sacraments, which he received as one hardly cognisant, yet he seemed to divine what was proceeding, and to be grateful. And he was buried in Denham Church according to the rites of the established religion. It was not possible to do otherwise.

CHAPTER XV

AT my father's death I succeeded to the title and to the Manor at Denham, and little joy, apart from grief at my father's death, I had from this, for I felt that England was no longer a home for me. I had lost my wife ; I had lost my earliest, my first and last love, and my father, and it was well-nigh impossible, and becoming daily more difficult, to practice my religion. My brother George openly professed the established religion ; Mass was no longer said at Denham or at Southlands ; it was perilous to be seen at Mass in London, and difficult to hear Mass save with the foreign envoys, for whom I had no liking. I resolved to leave England for ever, and I told my brother, George, that I would make over the Manor of Denham to him, since I

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vowed to him I should never marry again. He was married and had a son. I left England with one servant, and sailed for France.

It was a fair day in October, and there was so little breeze that it was some hours before we reached Calais. Among the passengers there was one I marked, for his features and gait seemed to me familiar, although I could give him no name. He was a middle-aged man, soberly dressed, with dark hair and a dark skin, whom I took to be a merchant, and falling into talk with him he told me that he was a cloth merchant, and that he was on his way to Flanders for purposes of commerce.

His dark skin seemed to be at variance with the light colour of his eyes. He told me he was a native of Ypres, and that he had little English. We conversed in French, which he spoke, as I thought at first, with a strong Flemish accent, but a sudden inflexion made me all at once suspect that he was English,

and that I had seen him before. He noted my half-recognition of him, and as we were nearing Calais he said he had one or two objects he would have me see. So saying, he brought forth a wallet which he unrolled, and which contained one or two uncut stones, and among them a gold signet ring, which he pressed into my hand. As he did so I started, for I recognised the ring. It was one I had often seen on the finger of my friend, and my once boon companion, Andrew Hynd, and the stranger, seeing me start, put his finger to his lips. Presently he told me the name of the inn where he purposed to stay the night at Calais, for it was too late to proceed further either for him or for myself.

I lost sight of him in the bustle of the landing, but I inquired the way to the inn, which was named *Les Trois Rois Mages*, and found my way to it, and ordered supper and a room. Presently the stranger arrived, and did the same, but he paid no heed to me, as there were other travellers present. We supped at dif-

ferent tables, but when supper was ended, the other travellers withdrew, and we were left to ourselves. He then drew up a chair before the fire and called for a bottle of wine, which he begged me to share with him, as he might have done to any chance acquaintance. As soon as we were left alone, he revealed himself to me.

“I am,” he said, “none other than your friend and schoolfellow, Andrew Hynd, and I have stained my skin and dyed my hair, and taken this disguise, for a purpose which I may not reveal to you; and we must be careful not to be caught talking English, for it must not be known that I am in France, nor must you at any time reveal to others that you have seen me. I assured him of my discretion, and we spoke of the past and the present. I asked him whether he still believed in the triumph of the Reformers, and whether his heart were still with them.

“They are triumphing in England,” he said, “and the Huguenots will most surely triumph in France, for they are the more powerful and

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the most closely knit party in the State, and possess the most spirited leaders: Coligny and Condé; but as for my own heart, I admit it has suffered variation and a change. My heart was ever with the Reformers until I had lived for some time at the French Court, and I lived there until the death of King Francis II, the outbreak of Civil War, and of war between France and England. The longer I lived at the French Court, the less I learned to love the Huguenots, and at last I came to believe that there was little indeed to choose between the two factions, as each was seeking for power."

"And now," I asked, "do you hold with the other side and the older religion?"

"Man changes," he said, "as he grows older. When I was young I believed that we were about to witness the dawn of a Golden Age, and that the new doctrines would bring this about, but now that Golden Age seems to me further removed than ever, and Reform seems to me but the mother of civil strife. As for the Huguenots, they are no more

tolerant than those of the other camp. It was the burning of Servetus that first opened my eyes to this."

"And yet," I said, "there were many who suffered for heresy at home during the last reign."

"Yes," he said, "for heresy, but wait, heresy has now become treason, and in a while it is the whole people who will suffer, or submit."

So he spake, putting into speech fears that I had harboured so many years ago and expressed to him myself, but he had forgot this. I asked him if, during his stay at the French Court, he had been brought into the orbit of the Queen of France, Mary Stuart. I asked the question without forethought or ulterior purpose, as I might have asked him if he had seen the great cathedral at Rheims or the fair of St. Germain. His face lit up and changed.

"Yes," he said. "I was at Court, and so could not fail to see her."

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“Is she truly as beautiful as they say?” I asked.

“I do not know,” he said, “whether she is beautiful according to canon. Maybe not.”

I begged him to describe her to me, still only idly curious.

“I cannot describe her,” he said. “Who could? She is surpassing tall and her eyes are side-long, and her hair and hands delicate, and she treads the ground like a goddess, and when she dances she bends like a flower in the wind, and when she speaks her speech is like song, like the song that the Italian poet said held back the mariners in mid-ocean.” He talked on as if I were not there. “She has more than beauty,” he said. “When you see her, and converse with her, you wonder how God having once made her forbore to destroy all other mortals he had made; for her graciousness is beyond compare, as far beyond compare with the attributes of other mortals as the rose among other flowers, or the sun among lesser luminaries. For there is

a light that shines from her that others have not, and a fragrance about her as well as an unparalleled grace of mien and form. Ask of any, ask of me, the colour of her eyes, and no two men will give you the same answer ; some will say blue ; others hazel, and others again black ; for it is true that when those eyes shine upon you, such is their swift lightning, you are too much dazzled and too greatly blinded to note their hue. And as to her converse, it is so witty and so rare, so well attuned in sense and sound, that she muffles with it the tramping of time's footsteps and she turns to gold the hours, howsoever leaden, and sweetens and tames the roughness of the seasons however furious and inclement."

"But Andrew," I cried out, for the scales in a flash had fallen from my eyes, and I saw the truth clearly, and I had the key to his change of opinion, "you love her and you are here upon her service."

"I love her more than life," he sighed, "and since you have guessed my secret I will

tell you all. When she came to the French Court as Queen of France I perforce saw her, and I at once worshipped her, but from afar, and as the dog chained in the kennel of a yard may look up to the lady in the palace tower. I seldom exchanged words with her, but sometimes—for she forgot no one—she would of her favour drop me a flower of courtesy. I, who until then had fretted in France, hankered rather for the Germanies, had found my lode-star. The time, the golden time of her swift reign, came and went like a summer dream ; and she left France for Scotland, not without tears, heartburn and apprehension. As soon as she was departed, France and the French Court were to me like an empty darkened room, in which there had lately been feasting, music and lights. I strove to be transferred to England, and this was not difficult, for civil war broke out in France, and our English Queen, as you know, siding with the Huguenots, found herself first at war with the French King and, later, after the murder of Guise,

with both parties ; for both parties in France were at one in their will to drive the English from French soil, and to prevent Calais from falling once more into our hands. Since then I have been twice to Scotland ; once upon a mission and once secretly. And now I am on my way, not to Flanders, but first to Paris, bound on no political mission, but the bearer of a letter from the Queen of Scots to her devoted servant, M. de Ronsard, that most famous poet.

“ I must needs make this journey in disguise, for should I be recognised by any of the English, or indeed of the French, they would have no doubt but that I had come hither on a political mission, and I should come to harm, for she is surrounded by spies, and so are all who wish her well in the three countries.

“ And I swear to you,” he said, “ that this is my only mission, although in times such as these perhaps not even you will believe my word.”

I told him I would never doubt his good

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faith, and set his mind at rest. I asked him how it fared now with the Queen of Scotland, and he said :

“ Ill, for she is surrounded on all sides by foes. They fear in England that she will wed again ; her offspring would then be the heir of England. Cecil has proposed that she should acknowledge the right to the English Crown to be vested in our Queen, and the lawful heirs of her body, and that our Queen for her part should declare that, failing her issue, the succession should belong of right to the Queen of Scotland, but to this our Queen would not consent. A meeting between the two Queens in the northern counties of England had then been debated. Indeed, the time and place were determined, and a passport writ for the Queen of Scots and a thousand of her retinue, but against this meeting Cecil urged that the rains had made the roads impassable ; that the Queen’s houses from London to York were out of repair, and that provision of poultry could not be made in so

short a space of time as from the twentieth of June to the end of August.

“ But this,” said Andrew, “ was not the true reason. “ Our Queen,” he said, “ is afraid of the Queen of Scotland. She fears, and rightly dreads, the youth, the beauty, and the accomplishments of Mary Stuart. She has no mind to be eclipsed and outshone, and she has no stomach for a rivalry in which she is bound to be worsted, and she fears, too, the influence the presence of Mary Stuart might have on many men in England, and rightly, for there is no man who has ever beheld her who has been the same man after enjoying that sight as he was before. But, as for Mary Stuart, she pines for the air and sunshine of France, and truly where she is now it is bleak and desolate, and she is surrounded by frowning and unfriendly faces.”

I asked whether she would be prone to wed again, and Andrew said they were pressing suitors upon her, chiefly those who were to her the more distasteful.

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“ She has everywhere enemies,” he said, “ in England, France and Scotland.”

As he said this a stranger entered the room, and Andrew made me a sign, and he went to bed with but a nod of greeting, and I followed later. We had already agreed to meet at Amiens, and we were both bound for Paris for the moment, and, later, I for Rome and Andrew to visit M. de Ronsard. The Queen of Scots, Andrew had told me, held this poet in the highest esteem, and what he said she missed most now of all the pleasures and amenities she had foregone since she had departed from France were the honeyed sonnets he had been accustomed to rhyme for her. We were both to set out again on the following day ; but we must not he said, travel together. He would leave early for St. Omer, where he had business and where he would spend the night, but we must not meet there. It would be perilous. After that we were to take different routes ; Andrew by way of Abbeville and I through Doullens. At Amiens he hoped

we might meet and converse in safety, or, failing that, at Beauvais. I started the next morning early, but he had left Calais before dawn, and I arrived at St. Omer in time to hear Mass at the Church of Saint Rémy. I slept at St. Omer that night, and started the next day for Amiens, where I arrived in the evening, and sought a small inn Andrew had told me of: *la Belle Hôtesse*. As soon as I entered the inn I marked him sitting by the fire, but he signed to me not to recognise him. I called for supper and ate it by myself. Andrew supped in another corner of the room, and paid no heed to me. There were several other travellers, booted and armed, who called for wine, drank, or made as if they were drinking deeply, and talked and laughed loud, but there was something, so it seemed to me, of pretence in their clamorous hilarity. Towards the end of the meal they began to talk of the King and the Queen-Mother, with mocking deference, and they toasted the Admiral. It was plain they were Huguenots,



and all the travellers present were of their way of thinking, save one, a pallid youth who sat alone at another table, blessed himself when he had ended his meal, and left the room. Before I had eaten my supper another man entered. It was the same man whom I had seen at the inn of the *Trois Rois Mages* at Calais on the night I had sat in company with Andrew. As he entered Andrew looked at me, with, as I thought, a hint of warning, but no muscle of his face moved. As soon as he had finished his supper, Andrew said good-night to the host and went up to his room. I followed later, hoping he would come to my room, but I dared make no sign, and he did not visit me. I lay on my bed dozing but could not sleep.

Towards daybreak I opened the casement, which looked out on to the yard. It was a clear autumn morning with a sharp bite in the air. While I was looking out I saw Andrew walk across the yard to the stable and come back with his horse saddled, and presently the

host of the inn came out and they bid each other farewell. The host, a timid and jovial old man, whispered some words in his ear. Andrew mounted his horse quietly, and, looking up, he caught my eye. He put his finger to his lips and pointed to the gate. He then left the inn.

About twenty minutes later there was a furious clatter in the yard. Shouts, oaths, and a clash of steel. I looked out again, and there were the Huguenots of the night before, and the man I had seen at Calais, engaged in loud altercation and dispute with the host, who was striving to placate them. After some delay an hostler brought their horses and they galloped away cursing and swearing, while the host threw up his hands in despair. I was uneasy. I ran downstairs, paid my reckoning, roused my servant, and asked for our horses. In twenty minutes' time at about six of the clock I had left the inn. I was in two minds which road to take, wishing now to overtake Andrew, and I knew he was bound for

Beauvais, so I made for Conty.

I had been riding nearly an hour when I was startled by an object I saw by the roadside that looked like a horse. I dismounted, and when I drew near I saw it was a saddled horse that had been shot dead and was lying across the road. Hard by near the ditch I found the body of Andrew covered with wounds. The body was cold, and near it I found the parchment cover of a packet whose seal had been broken and whose content had been rifled. On it was written in delicate character : “*A Ronsard l’Apollon de la source des Muses,*” and there remained the fragments of a broken seal. I took the parchment and preserved it. There was nothing else on his person except a pistol that had been fired and the empty sheath of a dagger.

Not far off there was a small Priory, and I walked up to it and rang the bell, and a monk came out and greeted me. I told him what I had met with on the road, and he held up his hands in horror. He sent some workmen

who were busy in the garden to bring Andrew's body into the Priory. I said I knew nothing of him save that he was a traveller whom I had met with at Calais.

"Murdered no doubt for his money!" the monk said.

There was nothing to be done for Andrew, for he had been dead some time, but the monks promised me that he should receive Christian burial, and they begged me to remain with them at the Priory until the burial should take place, if I could spare the time. I was taken to the Prior, who received me with courtesy, when he heard I was an English Catholic, and he pressed me to be his guest with much civil entreaty. I acceded to his request, and the Prior carried out his promise, and Andrew was buried according to the rites of the Church. Of the Huguenots and the stranger I saw no more. I left the Priory the day after the burial, leaving some money with the Prior to say Masses for the soul of Andrew. The Prior and the monks thanked me, and wished me

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God-speed, and warned me to beware of strangers, for in these troubled times the roads were infested with robbers and adventurers and marauders, and no one was safe.

And thus I set out for Beauvais.

CHAPTER XVI

I ARRIVED at Beauvais without molestation or adventure, and neither then nor later did I see any more of the Huguenot brawlers, or the stranger I had met with at Amiens, nor had I any means of discovering whether it was they who had murdered Andrew Hynd for some political reason unknown to me, or whether he was set upon by robbers for the sake of his purse. But I determined that as he had been baulked in the fulfilment of his mission, I could at least deliver the piece of parchment that I had preserved to M. de Ronsard, as an earnest of his intention and a proof of the Queen of Scotland's goodwill. Thus it was I determined to approach M. de Ronsard if it were possible when I should arrive at Paris. I lodged in Paris at an inn that Andrew had recommended

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me, and I waited upon the English Ambassador, who received me with courtesy, and also upon my banker. I was taken to Court, and presented to the Queen Mother and to the King, who was fourteen years old. My wish to become acquainted with the great poet was soon and easily fulfilled, as M. de Ronsard was Almoner-in-Ordinary to the King, and it was his duty to be in attendance on His Grace at his morning orisons, to kneel beside him in prayer, to take his orders for Mass and to transmit them to the Clerk of the Chapel, and to hand the King his book of Hours at Mass, and to receive and hold the King's hat and gloves. The Queen Mother, so the Ambassador told me, was greatly concerned at this time to secure the goodwill of our Queen ; she was even planning a match between the Queen of England and her son, in spite of the disparity of their ages ; and all English visitors were in consequence welcomed and well treated. So it was that, the Ambassador having told her I was anxious to meet the Prince of French

poets, the meeting was easily brought about one morning at the Louvre after Mass. M. de Ronsard was at this time only two score years old, but he seemed older ; his sharp features were already worn ; he was bald, and he had been deaf, the result of some early illness, for many years, and his deafness had prevented him taking a more active share in the life of the Court, which was a cause of sadness to him, as he delighted in outdoor sport and all forms of martial exercise.

He greeted me warmly, hearing that I was an Englishman, and he invited me to visit him and dine with him on the morrow at his house.

I proceeded thither the next day. He lived on the hill of *Sainte-Geneviève* in a pleasant house in the *Rue des Morfondus*. The house was beyond the walls of the city and possessed a spacious garden and a large mulberry tree, and adjacent to it was a stately edifice adorned with mottoes in Greek, built by M. de Baïf, the Ambassador, and now inhabited by his son, a poet of note.

M. de Ronsard told me that during his stay in England he had spoken English with ease, but that now, for want of practice, he had lost the habit, so we conversed in French and in Latin. He spoke much of England and indeed seemed to have forgotten little, which was all the more remarkable seeing that he was only fifteen years old when he visited our country. He spoke of King Henry, of his prowess at tennis ; his great culture and scholarship ; of the “*grands milords*” he had seen ; of the swans on the Thames ; and of what had pleased him more than aught, the sheep in the English meadows. And, as he repeated the words “*Les prairies Anglaises*,” his eyes, so piercing and metallic in talk, were veiled in dream. He asked after the Queen, “*une si belle et une si noble reine*,” and expressed his great admiration for her beauty and her wit. He said it was a boon that the two countries were at peace, for it was folly that there should be strife between two such near neighbours ; that King Henry had been the closest friend of

King Francis I. The poet said he was at this moment correcting the proofs of a collection of his verse which he was about to dedicate to our Queen. He fetched me the proofs of a tall volume entitled *Elégies, Mascarades, Bergerie*, dedicated to the incomparable Queen of England, and he pointed out to me, not without a smile, a poem addressed to *My lord Robert Du-Dlé, comte de L'Encestre, ornement des Anglais . . et merveille du monde.*

I spoke of Scotland, which he remembered little of save the fierce waves on the coast and the squalls, and then, at last, I spoke of Andrew. He remembered him well. I then rehearsed the sequence of events which had ended in Andrew's death, and I gave him the parchment which I had taken from Andrew's hand. M. de Ronsard was much concerned and deeply moved. He knelt down on one knee as he received the parchment and kissed it reverently.

“It is indeed her handwriting,” he said, “none other has ever written with so much

grace. *Elle a des doigts de fée.*" His eyes filled with tears. "There may haply be greater queens in the future," he said, "but never one so rare."

Andrew, he said firmly, had been the victim of marauders ; the roads of France were infested with outlaws. His death was due to no political agent. Why should they kill him ? It was true the Huguenots hated Mary Stuart, but she was in Scotland and would never return to France. It had been an act of the greatest imprudence on Andrew's part to disguise himself as a merchant. Such a disguise was certain to attract the attention of evildoers. He had been murdered for his purse, and he was a victim of his imprudence ; but then, I must pardon him saying so, the English were ever imprudent. There was not an Englishman who was not original from the crown of his head to the tips of his toes ; it was this that made their force ; but sometimes they were the victims of their gift, and paid for it dearly. He was deeply grieved over the

death of “*ce pauvre André—si bon, si doux, si vif, si tourmenté.*” He was overwhelmed at receiving even the torn fragment of a missive from the Queen of Scotland. He would send her a sonnet at the first opportunity.

While he said all this I could not help wondering whether he was expressing what he truly thought, or whether in his heart he did not harbour a suspicion that Andrew’s death had not been due rather to policy than to a marauder, and that his mission maybe had concealed other and wider purposes than to bring the poet a greeting from the Queen of Scotland. If he thought so, he was careful not to betray his thought ; for he himself, as all the world knew, was an ardent champion of the Catholic Faith and an open and fearless enemy of the Reformers and the Huguenots, and of all heretics, and the present object of their most violent attacks. At the same time, I knew it was the present policy of the Queen Mother that good relations should be maintained with the Queen of England ; that he

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was well aware of this ; the dedication he had shown me was the proof.

“ The Queen of England must choose a husband worthy of her,” he said, “ and then all problems will be solved.”

He was thinking, no doubt, of the possible rivalry between the Queen and the Queen of Scots.

“ And that poor Queen of Scotland,” he added, “ she needs a husband to protect her. Let us pray she will find someone worthy of her. Ah ! there are many in this country who would willingly die for her. Would that the Paladins of France were alive : Reynold and Lancelot and Roland to espouse her quarrel and to defend her cause.”

I said I had never seen her.

“ Then,” said the poet, “ you do not know what is perfect beauty, nor what grace means.”

And he repeated me some lines he had written about her, which I treasured in my memory, and have turned into rougher accents:

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*In middle spring between the lilies born,
Her body whiter than the lilies gleamed,
And roses from Adonis blood were shorn
Of their live colour, and less roses seemed.*

When I told him that I admired these lines, he said that he had written countless verses in the Queen's honour, but never a line worthy of her.

And he repeated a little poem which I have likewise turned into English :

*Just as we see, half rosy and half white,
Dawn and the morning star dispel the night,
In beauty thus beyond compare impearled
The Queen of Scotland rises on the world.*

I asked him if the Huguenots were powerful in France ; he said that the country had been distracted by civil strife, and that all were weary and longing for peace. But he was convinced that the tide of Huguenot influence was now on the ebb.

“ Unfortunately,” he said, “ we are so

violent here, we lack your great English good sense and spirit of compromise and justice. Your Queen and your Ministers know how to conciliate all parties."

I told him I feared that the schism would triumph in England, and that it was for that very reason I had left my country. I could not live without the Mass, and the Mass was no longer said in England. He affected the greatest astonishment at this and said that he was certain our Queen who was so learned a woman herself, so wise and so witty, so finished a humanist, and the daughter of so acute a theologian, would in the end contrive to bring about a reconciliation between all parties.

I said that the Queen was not free ; that she was surrounded by powerful statesmen who favoured schismatic and heretical opinions, and the Huguenot cause, and that I feared the coming of Queen Mary to Scotland, who was at present the heir to the throne of England, would make matters more difficult for the English Catholics.

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“ Both the Queens must marry,” said the poet, “ and then all will be well.”

I reflected that this would not be a final solution of the problem, but we talked of political matters no more, as we each of us understood that these subjects were not without pitfalls. I then spoke to the poet of his verse, and I begged with deep respect to be allowed to add my meed of worthless praise to the acclamation of the whole world.

“ I am forty years old,” he said, with a sigh, “ and what man can write verse when he has passed *la quarantaine*. A shadow has fallen upon me: the shadow of winter. I write; but I write wedding odes, compliments and panegyrics, *des poésies de commande*, and sometimes I wonder whether of all that I have written anything will remain. Time is a terrible sifter and wields a merciless scythe. I have loved the service of the Muses, it is true, but their service has worn me out. I am old and grey and deaf before my time. It is true I have fame in plenty, and I have reaped

golden laurels, and enjoyed tangible rewards ; honour, and the love of women. But all this is deceptive, and sometimes it is an illusion. *De très méchants poètes ont joui d'une grande célébrité.* I sometimes wonder whether I am a real poet, or only a *demi-poète*, a successful versifier, who has had the good fortune to please the great and the mighty : Queens, kings, soldiers and statesmen, and to catch the ear of fashion and the mood of the moment. I have boasted often and loudly in my verse that my rhymes will never die ; but in my heart I have wondered, and I wonder now more than ever, whether this is true.”

I answered him that he had written verse that the world would not willingly let die.

“ Think,” he said, “ how little remains to us of antiquity ; and I know that at my best, try as I might, I could not rival Vergil, Horace and Catullus—*sans parler des Grecs*. I said the lettered world considered that he had indeed rivalled the ancients and that he had added a chord to the antique lyre : a

note of tenderness and Faith which they had never known.”

It was kind of me to say so, he said, especially as I was an Englishman, for the English were great lovers of poetry and music, and practised both the arts, which should never be separated, and especially the latter, to perfection. Was I fond of music? I said that I delighted in it. He sighed and said that after dinner we would walk round to M. de Baïf’s house, and that I should hear some pleasant melodies. He, alas, could hear but a ghost of it, if that!

Dinner was then announced, and he ushered me into the dining-room, where a dainty meal was served and some pleasant wine from Anjou. He talked now chiefly of the country, English and French, and a deal of his country home, the Priory of *Saint Gilles de Montoire* in the *Vendômois*. It was there that he was happy, he said, and it was there that he wished to be at present, indeed he hoped to be able to proceed thither before long, for he loved the season of autumn: the russet leaves, the golden

poplars, the crimson shrubs, the scarlet berries, the reaped fields and the stubble ; the brown ricks, the great stillness ; the season when the forests showed their *têtes effeuillées* ; and, later on, the short winter days and the long winter nights ; and he repeated some lines he had written, which I have turned into English :

*Those long-protracted nights of winter slumber-bound,
When the slow moon so still her chariot drives around,
When the Dawn so delays to answer Chanticleer,
And the dark nights do seem to watchful soul a year.*

“ I am finished,” he said, “ as a poet ; but I have still the fields, the woods, my garden, and my library : Aristotle, Plato and the poets, *ces bons hôtes muets* ; the plants, the flowers and the stars.

When dinner was ended he took me to his neighbour’s house. M. de Baïf, besides being a poet of merit, was anxious that good verse should be married to music that was worthy

of it. He gave me a warm welcome, but out of deference to M. de Ronsard, and having regard no doubt to his deafness, he said the time for music was inopportune, as his musicians were absent and his instruments in need of being tuned ; so we spent an agreeable hour in converse, in which M. de Ronsard played the chief part, and when I took my leave the poet entreated me not to forget to visit him in the *Vendômois*, but I reminded him that I was on my way to Rome.

“ *Ah ! Rome !* ” he said, “ *le seul refuge des exilés*, ” and by the accent in which he spoke these words I understood that he was well aware of the troubles and problems which had beset me, although circumstances made it difficult for him to talk of them with me.

I stayed in Paris another ten days, but I had no further opportunity of seeing M. de Ronsard, as he left Paris for the *Vendômois*, and his Priory was too far out of my route for me to pay him a visit.

I travelled by easy stages and I reached

R O B E R T P E C K H A M

Rome, after halting for some days at Florence,
just before the Feast of the Nativity.

Here I will lay down my pen, for I have no
time to relate, and my life at present is too
empty of incident to need record.

CHAPTER XVII

*Letters from Robert Peckham to Mistress Anthony
Restwold.*

GOOD MADAM,—

Our Lord bless you.

I have at last reached my goal and entered the city of my desire. I was lodged at first at the Bear, a decent inn, which was commended to me in Paris, but I have since moved to a hired apartment in the *Piazza di Minerva* near the Church of the *Santa Rotunda*, where I am well accommodated in three chambers hung with Cordova leather and furnished with sculptured and gilt articles, the host finding a cook.

I presented the letters I obtained in Paris incontinent to the French and Venetian am-

bassadors and to M. Mangot, the learned Paris Counsel, to whom M. de Ronsard hath recommended me. It was necessary, so they told me, that I should be presented to personages of influence at the Papal Court, lest I should be thought an adventurer, for there are only three classes of persons who come to Rome : the ambitious who are greedy for power, the traders who are greedy for money, and the pilgrims : I belong to none of these classes, but to a fourth : the weary.

The cold is less bitter than it was during my travels through France, but sharper than it is in England at this season, for there is a frost, and the winds are biting.

I hear Mass daily at the Church of *Santa Maria sopra Minerva*, hard by.

And there I heard midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, which gave me a sore longing to be once more at Denham as in the old days. On Christmas Day I heard the Papal Mass at St. Peter's. The Gospel and the Epistle were read first in Latin and then in Greek, but the

very splendour of the ceremony made my heart ache with desire for the chapel at Denham and the voice of Master Heathcote.

As yet I have explored the ancient city but little, but all that is ancient is not only in ruin, but the very ruins are buried, so that we walk upon the roofs of the ancient city. This strikes my spirit with a chill, and I move in a city of ghosts, more of a ghost myself than the sightless phantoms. There are many English here, some of whom I have become acquainted with. They are full of complaint, chiefly that we have no Ambassador to mind their interests, that life is dear, the innkeepers extortionate, the climate inclement and insalubrious, the victuals tasteless, and the wines sour.

I was received in audience by Cardinal Carpi, the eldest of the Sacred College. He asked me whether I had come to Italy to take the waters. I told him that this was indeed true, but that it was waters for the soul I needed, and not for the body, and he was pleased to say that he prayed I might

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find the refreshment I was in need of, but I must not forget that Rome needed the prayers of all her children.

And now, fare you heartily well, and may the Blessed Trinity govern and guide you.

Written at Rome, this present Tuesday in the vigil of the Epiphany, by the hand of assuredly your own servant,

ROBERT PECKHAM.

II

Our Lord bless you and yours.

GOOD MADAM,—

On the twenty-seventh of January I was advised to go and kiss the feet of the Pope. I went in the coach of Cardinal Carpi, who, after he had been granted an audience, caused me to be called by the Pope's chamberlain. The Pope was sitting in a corner of a large cool room and the Cardinal at his left hand. I knelt down and awaited for the Pope to give me benediction. I rose, as is prescribed, went half the distance across the room, knelt once

more on one knee, and received a second benediction, and then I advanced to the edge of the carpet which spreads out some feet in front of the Pope, and knelt on both knees, while the Cardinal who presented me knelt and moved back the Pope's robe from his right foot, shod in a red shoe with a white cross. I bent down and kissed the Pope's foot. Then the Cardinal covered the Pope's foot and rose to his feet and spoke on my behalf. The Pope wore a white garment and a large cross made of emeralds, and on his hand a diamond ring. He then rose to his feet and walked with us up and down the hall.

He is portly and grey but still active, albeit he is in his sixty-sixth year and walks with the aid of a stick.

His countenance is ruddy and his eyes are sharp and twinkle ; he has an easy familiarity in his intercourse with a play of kindly irony as of a well-tempered sword, and yet you are never oblivious either of the dignity of his office or of his person.

His person seemed to breathe courage and good cheer, and a salt-like savour of goodness, honesty and sweet reason, and his smile goes to the heart and bids you welcome. I understood well why they have called him the “Father of the Poor.”

He spoke at first to me in Latin, but such was the awe that the occasion and his presence struck me with, that it seemed to me when I answered him as if my own voice sounded strange and were coming from a far distance. He perceived my embarrassment and smiled it away, and when the Cardinal told him I had some Italian he at once broke into that language, saying the English spoke all languages. He asked incontinent after the health of the Queen, whom he prayed the Blessed Trinity would preserve body and soul. He had wished, he said, she had been able to send an Embassy to the Council, but he well understood there were thorns in her path. God had willed otherwise. We must live in hope. The Council, by the grace of God, had been brought

to a happy ending. "They told me," he said, "I should never live to see this, but I told them that I did not mean to die in such haste. No, no," and his eyes twinkled, and he laughed, a happy crystal laugh like that of a child. Then he spoke of Sir Edward Carne, sometime Ambassador at the Court of Rome, who when he was recalled at the suppression of the Embassy remained at Rome, at the entreaty of the Pope, and who died here four years ago and is buried in the Church of Saint Gregory.

The Pope spoke of him with live affection and his eyes were bedewed with tears, as he pronounced his name.

"They wanted him to go back," he said, "but I would not let him leave me. I could not do without him. And indeed he had little heart to go. He loved Rome. And you will love Rome too," he added, "although at first, I am sure, you are missing all the good things of your rich and beautiful country. But we have good things here too," and he smiled, "good things to eat and to drink, and

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the Roman wine is the best of all ; you must drink it at Tivoli."

He then made a slight gesture, which showed the audience was at an end. He exhorted me to maintain the devotion I had exhibited to the Church and then, having blessed me again, he bade me farewell and blessed all who were dear to me, and said : " You will not see me often again, for my task is done. They are not yet quite rid of me," he added, with a smile, " but they soon will be. *Coraggio.*"

Then I went back as on entering, kneeling halfway and again at the door. And as I left the presence of His Holiness I knew I had been in the presence of something rare and of great savour, and I do not hope to meet the like of it again.

Written at Rome the Tuesday after Candlemass by the hand of assuredly your own servant,

ROBERT PECKHAM.

GOOD MADAM,—

By the good offices of the Cardinal I have been to see the Library of the Vatican, which contains a great number of noteworthy books, and among them the original manuscript of the book which King Henry (God rest his soul !) wrote against Luther to Pope Leo X : *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum*. I was greatly moved at the sight of this book ; for albeit I was but six years of age at the time I remember my father telling me that the King had been given the title “Defender of the Faith” by the Pope. It is now Lent, and there is much private devotion and public ceremony ; but there are no images in the Churches. I have become intimate with a Patriarch, a Greek, who is versed in many languages. He has a library rich in old manuscripts and missals, some of which he keeps secret, for he says the “vandals” would rob him if they knew of their existence, and he vows the Vatican itself is not safe, “for Rome,” he says, “is the lodestar that

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attracts savages from all quarters of the world, and how many times has the city not been pillaged? Nothing," he said, "is certain in this world. The mightiest are put down from their seats, and the works of man are but dust and a shadow." And who knows this better than I, for I live here as one in a dream, and I would think I were asleep and must presently awaken, were it not for a gnawing at the heart and the ever-present yearning for the sights and sounds that I shall never more behold or hear.

Written at Rome this day after Ash Wednesday by the hand of your devoted servant,

ROBERT PECKHAM.

IV

Our Lord bliss you.

GOOD MADAM,—

At this season of Eastertide my thoughts are especially drawn towards you and to my beloved country, and I am in wonder how all are faring at home, and how it fares with

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my brother George and his wife at Denham. Here the season is advanced, and roses and artichokes are sold in the streets. The gardens of Rome are sumptuous and aromatic, and after the desolation and sharpness of the winter, which is to me rendered the more melancholy by the presence of much ruin and so much sepulture, you would not credit that we have in the city, in the gardens, and on the walls, room for so great a flowering and such foison. The city has blossomed like a rose and the sky is soft and balmy, and yet to me this warmth and that fragrance has brought small solace, for the air to me is alien, and all that is around me becometh daily more than less strange.

It is Passion Week, and yesterday I visited the Seven Churches. The Pope visited them on Monday. During Lent there have been many excellent sermons, the most eloquent being those of a Dominican friar and a renegade Rabbi. The Dominican, preaching on the necessity of change—change of habit, and change of heart—aware that the attention of

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some of his hearers was wandering, said, all at once, “even fair ladies like a change of dress from time to time,” which recalled the attention of his fair and gentle listeners.

I have become more intimate with M. Mangot, the friend of M. de Ronsard. M. de Ronsard has been given a new Priory and is busy at a new epick.

To-day I was present at the washing of the Altar at St. Peter’s, and the church was fragrant with oil and wine, as were the temples in the days of the Pagans. To-morrow the Image of Saint Veronica, not made by hands, will be exhibited. The crowd both outside and inside the church is so vast that it is difficult to see aught else ; such is the ardour of this people for their Faith. As you will full well understand, these sights tear at my heart.

Written at Rome at midnight on Thursday in Holy Week the nineteenth of April of the year 1565, by the hand of assuredly your own devoted servant,

ROBERT PECKHAM.

GOOD MADAM,—

Of all the ceremonies in Holy Week, that of the benediction of the Holy Candle on Saturday was to my mind the most striking, even more so than the procession of the Confraternities to St. Peter's on Good Friday, each member of whom bore a wax candle, with their files of penitences, marvellous as this was. Never have I noticed so great an illumination. But the blessing of the Candle, after so much display, fire and congregation, was as a whisper from heaven, the still voice after the storm. On the steps of Saint Peter's at dawn, the assistants brought the bronze tripod and lit the fragrant boughs of bay, and later on the first whiff of incense ascended in the bare church, and all at once the bell rang and the silence of the forty hours was broken. There are not many bells in Rome. But I know only this ceremony, which was more sparsely attended than the others, was to me a source of wonder and solace, and for a

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moment I forgot the sharpness of exile. But on Easter Day the pangs of longing came back to me with renewed sharpness, as I remembered Eastertide in the olden times, and I thought of the woods and fields near Denham ; the trees barely green and the spring cowslips, and the sight of the villagers at Mass, in their finery.

On Low Sunday the Pope bestowed alms on certain maidens in the Church of *La Minerva*, which is near to my apartment, and whither I go daily, and the day after I journeyed with M. Mangot to Tivoli, fifteen miles distant from Rome. It is the ancient Tibur, sung of by Horace and other poets. The town is built on the steep lower slopes of a range of mountains, and a stream flows through it, leaping down, and forming a waterfall of some hundred paces. Behind the town of Tivoli is the mountain range ; westward it faces the sea, and northwards there is a view over the wide plain, in which the city of Rome sparkles like a gem. In the town of Tivoli there is the palace and garden of the Cardinal of Ferrara,

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a haunt of flowers and waterfalls. It is an enchanted garden where the ingenious devices of man rival the lavish charms of nature. Thin threads of silver water leap down artificial channels between hedges of myrtle and box, and walls overgrown with roses. By some mechanical device organ pipes sound ; the voice of trumpets is counterfeited, and bronze flutes imitate the song of birds ; even a counterfeit owl appears and stops the singing of the birds in the midst of their song, and, disappearing again as suddenly, leaves them care-free to sing again. There are small pools girt with balustrades and surmounted by high columns of stone from which the silvery water leaps down into the broad basins. The threads of water as they descend meet in the air and their confusion in the sunshine begets a perpetual rainbow. Statues in marble and in bronze are half hid in the foliage, and the birds, as if they were privy to the secrets of the spot, answer their man-made rivals half in deference, and half in mockery, and the

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open cascades with their soft booming reply to the noise as of cannon, and the fusilade, as of arquebusiers, produced by the sudden falling of water into pipes brought about by some secret device.

The whole spot is as unreal and faery as some invention of the poet Ariosto or the palace of Merlin, the enchanter, and I came away from it wondering whether I had not tasted of some magical root, some potent mandragora, and whether all that I had witnessed were not a baseless vision.

We sat on the terrace of a little inn looking on the thread of silver cascade that leaps from the rocks. Amongst many church spires there is a Roman temple, graceful and slight in outline, said to be of the Sybil ; haply, Mangot said, where Horace had poured libations to the Sybil. And he repeated the words of the poet :

*Tibur Argeo positum colono
Sit meæ sedes utinam senectæ ;
Sit modo lassus maris, et viarum
Militiæ que.*

“ May the gods grant that Tibur, built by a Colony of Argos, be the quiet retreat of my old age ; may it be the place of my repose, wearied out with fatigues by land, by sea, and in the field.”

And at that moment two English merchants arrived at the inn, and, sitting down at a table next to us, clamoured in uncouth Italian for a bottle of wine. They were hot and breathless from having ascended the hill, and one of them said to the other :

“ A fine view ? ”

And the other answered :

“ Aye, but it’s not Blackfriars.”

And as he said this he hummed the words of a song that had once been familiar to me :

“ *There was a frog swam in the lake,*

The crab came crawlingly :

‘ *Wilt thou,’ quoth the frog, ‘ be my mate ? ’*

Quoth the crab, ‘ No, not I.’ ”

And at the sound of those words and that accent, the present and all that was around me,

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the blue hills, the dark crags, the thin cascade, the steeples, the temple, the azure sky and the flame-coloured wine we were quaffing all vanished, and I was once more within reach of St. Paul's, and in call of a wherry, and the gay houses of London rose before me, and the broad Thames, and the soft trees, and the meadows, and the call of London and the English countryside, and I said to Mangot :

“ Let us go home, for I have meseems a sense of pain.”

“ Where ? ” he asked, courteously, and with concern, and I said :

“ It is in the head, a touch of sun,” but verily it was in the heart, and we went into the inn and rested.

The next day we returned to Rome.

Written at Rome in the octave of Easter, the twenty-ninth of April, 1565, by the hand of assuredly your own servant,

ROBERT PECKHAM.

CHAPTER XVIII

From the Diary of Robert Peckham.

Rome, January, 1565.

Received in audience by Cardinal Carpi, a wise and prudent man. The Cardinal said that, albeit Christendom was in a sorry plight, he was more hopeful than he had been for some time. Germany, he said, he despaired of ; Poland was helpless ; France and Spain were still seething with the elements of disorder, although these were dormant, and frequently blotted with scandal. The kingdom of England, once so dutiful a daughter of the Church, had sequestered herself once more from the Holy See. But there was much to be thankful for : the happy conclusion of the Council of Trent. He told me that Morone,

the last President of the Council, had said to him when leaving for the Council that there was no hope for the Catholic religion. *Nulla spes erat.* It was verily in great part due to his honour and merit that the Council had been brought to a happy conclusion. Now the augurers were more cheerful. He had hoped until the end that the Queen of England would send her prelates to the Council, but the professors of schism seemed for the moment to be all-powerful in England. I told His Eminence that it was for this reason that I had left my country, for in England I saw no hope at present for the Catholic religion, and I for one could not live without it. His Eminence said I must not despair. We could perhaps sniff the dawn. The Queen of England was a wise woman.

“But,” I interrupted, “she is not free, and she is beset by discordant and powerful partisans.” I said I felt sure she had no more liking for heresy than His Eminence, but the statesmen, I told him, were afraid since the

advent of Queen Mary in Scotland and of the influence of the French Court.

“It has ever been the policy of France,” said the Cardinal, “to repress heresy at home and to inflame it abroad.”

I said this was true of the present day for the Queen Mother of France, who was courting the favour of our Queen and urging her, as I had been told, to exercise severity towards her subjects who were of the old religion. She has no more loyal subjects than these, I told the Cardinal, and that she is well aware of herself, but what can she do? Her seat is perilous, and whom can she trust? They tried to deprive her even of her Crucifix, but this she would not brook.

March, 1565.

I have become intimate with a patriarch, a Greek who is the possessor of a library which he keeps secret. He has told me under the seal of secrecy that he is in possession of the lost books of Livy which he had found by

chance in a monastery, but the manner of this discovery was so strange that he feared to make it public lest he be accused of necromancy and traffic with the evil one. He was determined to keep the secret to himself, but he showed me one of the volumes in which there was the narration of the death of Cicero. The passage struck me so forcibly that I craved his leave to transcribe it: Here follows the passage :

“ Marcus Cicero had departed from the city before the advent of the triumvirs, albeit he knew in his heart, and thus verily did it come to pass, that he could no more escape from Anthony, than Brutus and Cassius from Cæsar. First of all he sought his Tusculan home, and thence by devious stages his Formian, determining to embark from Cajeta. Thence he took sea once and again ; sometimes adverse winds drove him a shore, at others he could not endure the surge of the ground swell, and at last, wearied of attempted escape, and of life itself, he turned him back

and sought his higher villa, which was a little more than eight furlong from the shore.

“ ‘ I will die,’ he said, ‘ in my country which I have so often saved.’

“ We know that his men were brave and true to him, and ready to fight for him, but he commanded them to set down the litter, and to accept with meekness the decrees of an adverse fortune. Leaning out of his litter he thrust his neck out without flinching, and they cut off his head. But this was not enough to sate the witless barbarity of the soldiery. They cut off his hands likewise, blaming them for having dared to write orations against Anthony. They sent back his head to Anthony, by whose order it was affixed to the pulpit for orations called the Rostra, where Cicero as Consul, and often as ex-Consul, and that very year, had made orations against Anthony with an eloquence which had commanded higher praise than had hitherto been bestowed on any mortal voice. Men could scarce look upon those dismembered members for tears.

“ He was three score and three years old when he died, and had his death not been violent it would not ever have been held to be untimely ; he was happy in his achievement and in his rewards ; and, when in a long spell of good fortune and an even tenor of success, he was stricken by calamity : exile, the ruin of his political party, the death of his daughter, a death as tragic as it was untimely—he bore none of these ills as became a man, save alone his own death, and his very death to the impartial mind was less unmerited than it would seem at first sight, for the penalty he paid for defeat was no more severe than what he would have exacted from his enemy, had their several fortunes been exchanged, and he and not Anthony had triumphed.

“ Yet if we weigh his virtues and his faults in the scales, he was a great man, a memorable man, and to praise him befittingly it would need another Cicero.”

“ *Wearied of attempted escape and of life itself.*”
There is no escape.

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This sums up my life since I have come to Italy:

“Patriæ quis exsul se quoque fugit?”

July 1, 1565. Nemi.

No letter from England since three months.

September 31, 1565. Nemi.

A letter from George. The harvest fulfilled more than its promise. The walnut-tree in the garden was blown down in the great gale. The Queen of Scotland has married Lord Darnley.

October 6th, 1565.

Rome once more. The air is delicate. This seems to be the most agreeable season of the year in this city. No news from England.

December 8th, 1565.

Antonio brought me news that the Pope has died.

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January 8th, 1566.

Cardinal Sarti has been elected Pope. He will be Pius V.

Candlemass, 1566.

No news from England since the new year.

Low Sunday, 1566.

No news from England.

The Feast of Pentecost, 1566.

A letter from George in which he tells me that Mistress Restwold died on the tenth of April of a fever.

CHAPTER XIX

Poems found among Robert Peckham's Papers.

I

FAREWELL sweet Thames, where past the
glitt'ring towers
The silver swans sail proudly down the stream ;
Farewell deep meadows where I used to dream
And while away the gilded summer hours.

Farewell the beech, the walnut-tree, the oak,
White flour-de-luce and yellow daffodils,
Farewell the weedy pond, the babbling rills,
The flocks, the oxen, meek beneath the yoke.

Next year I shall not mark upon the wain
The sun-tann'd reaper bring the harvest home :

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Nor taste the savour of the furrowed loam,
Nor scent the coming of the April rain.

I shall not mark these things ; and though
they dwell
For ever in my heart, farewell, farewell.

Written at Denham on the Feast of Saint Michael,
1564.

II

I have forgone my due inheritance ;
My home, my house, my servants and my
friends ;
My daily business and my lawful ends,
And all the prizes of blind-folded chance.

I have forsook the consecrated place,
Where each bright hour of happiness was
spent ;
Forsworn my hopes, my dreams, my high
intent,
And furl'd my banner and denied my race.

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I have sequester'd from my ancient shield,
The salient emblem of his blazonry ;
The earnest of its oldest loyalty,
Erased the gilt and left an empty field.

And I had hoped to win for so much loss
A little gold. And I have purchas'd dross.

Written at Rome on Ash Wednesday, 1565.

III

There was an orb that glisten'd to the night
With flame more spotless than of star or moon,
There was a song surpassing earthly tune,
The captured echo of an angel's flight.

There was a flower more dainty than the bloom
That groweth in the gardens made by man ;
There was a rainbow of more wondrous span
Than that which glisters in the rainy gloom.

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There was a voice more sweet than human speech,

There was a walk transcending mortal gait,
A splendour that excelled terrestrial state,
A loveliness beyond all fancy's reach.

There was a soul unspoiled by the world's
leaven :

God grant I meet her once again in heaven.

Written at Rome on the Feast of Pentecost, 1567.

IV

I have no presents such as kings of old
Brought from the Orient to Bethlehem.
When laying down their sword and diadem,
They gave their myrrh, and frankincense, and
gold.

I have no precious alabaster box ;
Yet take what to my heart was once most dear :
A ribband and a sprig of faded phlox,
A scrap of parchment blotted with a tear.

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So little, yet it hurteth me to part
With dreams still strong and rooted memory :
The rusted sword, the silent battle-cry,
The smouldering remorse, the broken heart.

All dust and ashes is my sacrifice :
Take and transform it into living spice.

Written at Rome on the Feast of the Epiphany,
1568.

v

Alone when pride lies dying in the dust,
And living dreams are trampled under foot,
And scotch'd like a dead snake lies earthly
lust,

And sweet desire is torn up by the root ;

Alone when busy aims are cast away,
And glory tested shows as false alloy,
And fortune's prize but as a brittle toy,
The world's rewards but garlands that decay ;

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When every tie that strongly bound the heart
To mortal heart than life itself more dear,
Is cut in twain, however sharp the smart,
And howsoever bitter be the tear ;

Alone when all that wealth is sunk and drown'd
Can that which is beyond all price be found.

Written at Loreto on Palm Sunday, 1569.

CHAPTER XX

*Translated from the Papers of Monsr. Claude
Mangot, Jurisconsult.*

IT was in the month of January of 1565 that I was brought a letter from my old friend M. de Ronsard by an English gentleman, the son of an eminent English nobleman who was a jurisconsult of fame and learning and who had held high office in England as a magistrate, a Member of Parliament and a Councillor during the last three reigns. His son, Sir Robert Peckham, who brought me the letter had also been a Member of Parliament and a Councillor in the reign of the late Queen. He was a man of about fifty years old. His hair, which had been dark, was now grey, as well as his well-trimmed beard. His features were sharp

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and prominent ; his eyes were grey and sorrowful. He was versed in letters and spoke Latin with elegance as well as French and Italian. Although he had inherited a fine domain and good revenues, he had left all to his brother and had resolved to expend his revenues on alms, for he had no more heart to stay in England he said, owing to the religious dissensions between Catholics and heretics, which made it impossible for him to practise his religion, and had led to division between himself and his kin. He was a widower and had no children. Being thus without ties, weary of public office, and disgusted with the turn of affairs and the present current of thought in his country, he had sought asylum and rest in Rome. At the same time he was an ardent patriot, and not only was his country dear to him, so much so that his eyes filled with tears whenever the word England was pronounced in his presence, but he was deeply attached to the reigning house in England, to the Queen, the

late Queen, and the Queen's father, nor would he hear a word spoken against that monarch who, he said, was a good Catholic and a great man, who had fallen upon evil times and had been the victim of scheming women. What could a man with a nature such as the King's do, he asked, against the subtle charms of an Anne Boleyn? I asked him to describe her, and he said she was small and delicate, with eyes that were sometimes like flowers and sometimes like precious stones ; that she had charm and gaiety ; above all youth. I asked him if he thought she had merited so hard a fate, and whether she had been guilty of adultery and the other crimes she was accused of. He could not tell me. She had protested her innocence to the end ; some thought her guilty, some innocent. She was light it was true, but who could tell ? Women were a riddle. He himself believed in her innocence, but she had brought doom upon herself for the enmity she had shown to the incomparable Sir Thomas More and the proud Cardinal Wolsey.

That she had slandered both these personages and envenomed the King against them, there was no doubt. When I pointed out to him that the Queen of Scotland was the rightful heir to the English throne, he was greatly troubled and embarrassed and said that King Henry had wished his offspring to succeed him, and the King's will had been confirmed by Parliament. Queen Elizabeth, he said, was Queen by lawful right. I gave him introductions to such friends of mine I thought would be agreeable and useful to him, and he made use of my good offices ; but he remained aloof, and became intimate with none save with myself, but even I, who knew him well, was always conscious in his company of a certain reserve, a mask which he never doffed, and never did he speak to me with an open heart until he was dying. In spite of that, I was able to guess his sentiments and his opinions. He never spoke of his wife, nor of his marriage, and I divined that this had not been fortunate, nor was I ever able to ascer-

tain whether there had been other amorous or romantic adventures in his life. He was pious and heard Mass daily, and gave alms to the poor in plenty. He never refused any alms when asked for them. And one day, when he was solicited for alms by a man I knew to be a notorious thief and I tried to restrain him from giving, he said to me : “ It may be our Lord in disguise.”

During his first winter in Rome he showed himself often in society, and made the acquaintance of many men of note : prelates, lawyers, statesmen, and others.

During the summer months I took him with me to my villa at Nemi and the sojourn there seemed to please him, for he was fond of rural sights and of the country, of gardens, trees, and plants, and knowledgeable in farm work.

In the autumn he returned to Rome and spent much time both in society and in private study. Like all Englishmen, he was a good humanist, and he was busy he told me upon a translation of Vergil, and as well as a work

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more serious, but he never showed me a single line of what he had written.

It was after the following Pentecost that a great change came over him. He went no more out in society, and I saw him more rarely. I invited him once again to spend the summer with me in company with my eldest son, who was to pay me a visit, but he made excuse that he was too greatly occupied in his studies, and meant to take advantage of the quiet season to finish the work on which he was engaged—an examination and treatise he said of Roman Law.

During the next winter he fell sick of fever, which he contracted in the summer, and he lay for many weeks in bed. I visited him often. I was struck by the change in him. He had grown thin and pale, and all his fire and vivacity, of which he had ample provision, seemed to have left him. He seemed glad to see me when I visited him ; and he talked of books and of the affairs of the day with interest. When the news came of the death of my Lord

Darnley, the husband of the Queen of Scotland, he was much troubled. He said he was certain that the Queen of Scotland would bring misfortune to all who came in contact with her, and to both countries, as well as to herself. I spoke of the great esteem in which Ronsard held her, and he said :

“ She has the gift of inspiring love in the hearts of all who know her, to the point that they will be willing to sacrifice all—their country, their religion for the smile of her eyes.”

In the summer, I persuaded him to come with me to the Baths of Lucca, which had been recommended to me by the physicians, and he consented. We stayed there six weeks, and the waters seemed to relieve him somewhat. He came with me to Nemi after this, but here he was taken by another access of fever and returned to Rome.

The next year, in the summer, we went once more to Lucca, but he was from now onwards the constant victim of intermittent attacks of

fever, and the physicians could do him but little good and held out to him small hope of recovery. In the spring of 1569 he made a pilgrimage to Loreto. I was absent in the summer in France, and I did not see him until I returned to Rome at the end of August. I was greatly shocked when I visited him. He had become as thin and wasted as a skeleton, his eyes were fiery and his skin was like parchment. Directly I saw him he smiled and said :

“ I am dying, and it is time I died, for I am of no use to anyone. I am in the way and fit for the rubbish heap.”

He entreated me to visit him again shortly, as he had several commissions which he wished me to carry out. I now visited him daily. He was well tended by his English and Italian servants, who loved him dearly, and a priest brought him the Sacraments daily. He was too sick to get up and go to Mass. He told me he knew his end was near, and before he died he made me write down his testament, which was duly witnessed and signed. He

confirmed the making over of his estate to his brother, but this had already been effected before he left England ; he left his present possessions to the poor, save a Missal and a diamond ring ; the Missal was bequeathed to me ; the diamond ring to the Queen of England. It was his wish to be buried in Rome at *San Gregorio*, in the same Church where Sir Edward Carne, the Ambassador, had been buried, for he had a special devotion to Saint Gregory ; but he wished his heart to be sent to England and kept in Denham Church. "For," he said, "my heart belongs to England. I made a mistake in coming here. My life has been nothing but a tissue of mistakes. I was rash when I should have been timid, and timid when I should have been bold. I opposed my father's will out of season over trifles, and yielded to him without a murmur when I should have opposed him over matters of life and death. I should never have left England. I should have remained and resisted, or died in the

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attempt. I have done no service to anyone by leaving my country, nor have I found the peace that I sought, and which I was in need of."

I reminded him that he had enjoyed the advantage of being able to practise our religion and of living in the heart of Christendom at a time when Europe was distracted by schism, heresy and scandal.

He assented, but added : "I have been selfish ; I thought too much of myself. I should have thought more of others ; but it is too late now to wish things had been otherwise ; all I can do is to repent and to leave the world in humility."

Another time he told me that he had as a youth fostered high hopes and vast ambitions, but they had been nipped in the bud.

" You would not believe it," he said, " but at one time I had my dawn, and it was bright. I married too young and ill-advisedly, and I was entirely to blame for this. I spoilt my life and that of my wife ; she was in no wise to blame.

But where I was most blameworthy was in my relations with my father. I never told him the truth ; not the whole truth. I played a part with him, and I never dared to tell him that I saw full well that the consequence of his acts would be to bring about the contrary of what he desired and the ruin of all that he held most dear. But I was afraid of him and accustomed ever since my childhood to incline to his will, and to hold everything he did to be unquestionably right ; but later on I knew he was taking a wrong path and siding with error, and I kept silent, and so now I am paying the price of my silence and my cowardice."

At the beginning of September he grew more sick and more feeble, nor could he converse for more than a few moments at a time. And on the 10th of September, the Feast of Saint Pulcheria, Empress, after hearing Mass and receiving the Viaticum, he died peacefully. He had asked me that a tablet should be put up over his tomb in San Gregorio bearing this epitaph :

ROBERT PECKHAM

Here lies Robert Peckham, Englishman and Catholic, who, after England's break with the Church, left England because he could not live in his country without the Faith and, having come to Rome, died there because he could not live apart from his country.

I received this epitaph in these words from his own lips shortly before he died, and I did my best to carry out his instructions ; but the prelates who inscribed the inscription appended in the Latin tongue further details, which to my mind, even if they were necessary, added nothing to what had already been said.

THE END



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